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# FROM AN INDIAN GARDEN

BEING

A SELECTION OF ARTICLES CONTRIBUTED  
TO VARIOUS PERIODICALS

BY

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## PREFACE

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The following papers were prepared and read before Christian and non-Christian audiences during a period of more than twenty-five years. Nearly every one of them has been published as an article in Indian magazines or periodicals. Only a selection has been made out of a large number. A few have been lost. With a view, therefore, to preserving some of these my earlier efforts and meeting the oft-repeated wishes of friends who heard them delivered, I have decided to bring them out in a permanent form. The title is somewhat fanciful, but it was not easy to find one to embrace the great variety of topics discussed in these pages. The book may be regarded as a few cuttings from a humble little Indian Garden.

To the many kind friends who have helped me by subscribing for copies my best thanks are due.

J. LAZARUS.

SARGON HOUSE, VEPERY,  
1st February, 1908.



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## INTRODUCTORY.

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### WHAT LIV'ST THOU FOR?

Of mortal men on earth most live to flee  
The pangs of hunger dread ; for pleasure those  
Who food command ; for varied knowledge some  
Who patient toil to gain stern Nature's door  
And all her myst'ries view ; a few make fame  
Their life's chief end : yet all, alas, but find  
That knowledge, pleasure, food and fame, ~~nor~~ rest,  
Nor bliss can yield, nor peace to pining souls:  
For heav'n-born man a heav'nly goal would seek.  
And forward pressing God-like grow sublime  
And in this growth alone true bliss would know.  
Say, seeking soul, what liv'st thou for ? If not  
For food that ne'er can fill the hungry soul,  
Or knowledge vain that fills the mind but leaves  
The heart an aching void, or joy or fame,  
Fair flowers that blossom but to droop and die—  
If not for these, what wouldst thou then on earth  
Live for or love to seek ? I'll tell thee, friend,  
A God-like life secure and this pursue.  
“ But what is God-like,” wond'ring askest thou,  
“ And how secure it in this world of woe ” ?  
Go humbly gaze in love on God-Revealed,  
Th' eternal Word who perfect man became,  
That man by faith in Him to God might come  
And coming, find in Christ his goal and bliss.



## SECTION I.

### LITERARY PAPERS.

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#### 1.—THE TAMIL ALPHABET.\*

One of the many striking features of India is the multiplicity of its alphabets. In this as in other respects India is more a continent than a country. In a lithographed volume published at Calcutta in 1877, there are no fewer than sixty different specimens of the alphabets used in this country. To the student of palæography, therefore, this immense variety of Indian scripts cannot but present a most fruitful field for investigating the history of the ancient Hindus, and their political and religious developments.

But many as the Indian alphabets are, they readily group themselves into two great families, the Nagari or Sanskritic in the north, and the Dravidian in the south. For the distinction as to language, though not as to alphabet, we are indebted to Bishop Caldwell. The term Dravidian, as applied to the non-Sanskritic languages of Southern India, owes its origin entirely to him. He was the first to suggest its identity with the word *Tamil*, and to apply it to designate the Turanian family of South Indian languages. But for the Dravidian alphabets themselves, more especially in regard to the study of South Indian inscriptions, we are indebted to the indefatigable labours of the late Dr. Burnell. The second revised edition of his work on South Indian Palæography was published in 1878. The plates in the appendix are of the greatest epigraphic value. They are copied from inscriptions and royal grants. Not only did the learned epigraphist decipher

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\* An address delivered to the Tamil Sangam of the Presidency College, Madras.



the scripts, but he ingeniously derived an alphabet from such as he considered of sufficient importance from his standpoint. Those who desire to investigate the subject of Dravidian alphabets more or less thoroughly, I must refer to this work, to the two volumes on the *Alphabet* by Dr. Isaac Taylor, and to papers and articles on the subject in the Journals of the Royal Asiatic Society. The Tamil alphabet, however, must be of special interest to the members of the Tamil Sangam connected with the Presidency College. I propose, therefore, in this brief paper, to make a few remarks on the origin and development of the thirty Tamil characters with which we have been familiar from childhood. There are also other features of this alphabet, such as its relation to other Dravidian alphabets, its present arrangement, its method of animation, its phonetic system, its general defects and excellences, which claim our consideration.

Let us first enquire into the age of the Tamil alphabet. We have no materials from which we might deduce even the approximate date of its invention. But there is no doubt whatever as to the great antiquity of the language itself. That it was spoken in the days of King Solomon, or about 1000 B.C., there is conclusive evidence. The Phœnician merchants who came to India and on their return took with them peacocks, also conveyed the Tamil name of these birds, *viz.*, *tôgai*, for they had none of their own. This fact, which Bishop Caldwell was the first to discover, proves the language to be at least 3,000 years old. But how does this affect the age of its alphabet? At this remote period, the Tamil people may not have known the art of writing. The language may have been merely oral, and not written. But three little words of a purely Tamil origin, and obviously as old as the language, go against such a supposition. They are the verbs *erutu* and *varai*, and the noun *eruttu*. Both the verbs mean *to write*, and the noun, a *letter*, or literally, *what is written*. The first verb contains the *r*, so peculiar to Tamil, while the second is

the same as the Telugu *vr̥di*, and points to an Indo-European relationship. These primitive words prove that the Tamil people, in ages long gone by, were acquainted with the art of *writing*, and that they made use of *letters*. It is but natural, then, to suppose that they had an alphabet of their own. The absence, however, of any literature or grammar prior to the eighth century A.D., is much to be regretted. All that we can say is, that the ancient alphabet was either lost, or its place usurped by another ancient, but more modern, alphabet, or, what is more probable, that the primitive alphabet itself has survived the long lapse of centuries and come down to us in its present, though much modified form.

There is, however, conclusive proof of the earliest trace of Tamil writing of a more subsequent date. At all events epigraphic evidence carries us back to the eighth century A.D.

Dr. Burnell has derived an alphabet from the copper grant to the Jews of Cochin made about the year 774. This grant is written in the character called *Vatteruttu*, the round hand. It will be found on careful comparison that this is substantially the immediate parent of the modern Tamil alphabet. A mere glance is enough to establish the identity of all the eighteen consonants and the six vowels in the *Vatteruttu*. Of the *Vatteruttu* Dr. Taylor remarks as follows:—"It is a very ancient Dravidian alphabet of obscure origin, which, however, appears from the system of vowel notation to be derived from a Semitic source, and may possibly have been obtained from the Phœnician traders." I look upon this alphabet, therefore, as a safe landmark from which we can trace the course of the Tamil alphabet, both backwards and forwards, along the stream of time.

A few remarks on the *Vatteruttu* may not be out of place here. Of the vowels the individual long *ā* is missing (evidently because in the grant there was no word with this vowel for its initial), though in combination with consonants it is clearly identified. Short *e*, and *o*, as well as *au*, are not found at all.

This apparent resemblance to the Sanskrit vowel system is, however, contradicted by the fact that long and short *e* and *o* had no special characters assigned to them for a long time. It is asserted by many scholars that *au* has never been a Tamil vowel. In combination, the long *ā* is indicated by a mere dash (—); short *i*, by a curve with the horns upwards, just the reverse of the modern symbol; long *i*, by a hook added to the short *i* sign, as at present; *u* and *ū* differ little from the modern forms; *ē* is indicated by a curve prefixed to and joined with the consonant; and *ai*, by a similar curve with a hook at the lower end. The dot over the consonant is conspicuous by its absence. As will be shown further on, it was a later importation. This alphabet also shows clearly that at this period, Tamil and Malayalam were one and the same language, and that this was the alphabet wherewith Tiruvalluvar composed his *Kural* a century or two afterwards. The modern Malayalam alphabet was subsequently adapted from the Grantha characters of the Tamil Brahmans.

Having now traced the Tamil alphabet to the *Vatteruttu* of the eighth century, let us see if it is possible to trace it further backwards and arrive at its ultimate source. Dr. Burnell says that "the derivation of the South Indian alphabets (except the *Vatteruttu*) may be represented as follows in a tabular form," and thereupon exhibits all the more important alphabets as being derived from the world-known South-Asoka inscription. He does indeed place the *Vatteruttu* side by side with the old Grantha, but does not connect it with the parent stock. The ultimate origin of this independent alphabet, therefore, appears to be lost in obscurity. Still it is not difficult to trace its descent from the South-Asoka alphabet, which is now the generally acknowledged parent and prototype of all the Indian alphabets. This inscription was cut about 250 B.C. By A.D. 1, the Cave and Gupta alphabets were formed. By A.D. 350, the Cave produced the Chera, Chalukya, and Vengi scripts, while the Gupta about 1000 A.D. became the parent of the



Nagari character. Tulu and Malayalam are derived from the Chera through the Grantha ancestry, while Telugu and Kanarese owe their parentage to the Chalukya alphabet. But *Vatteruttu* stands alone in the family of Indian alphabets. To a superficial observer the Asoka and *Vatteruttu* alphabets must appear quite distinct owing to the upright, rigid character of the former, and the rounded, irregular form of the latter. But on a closer scrutiny, marks of resemblance, if not of identity, cannot fail to be noticed. This is especially the case with *a, u, k, r, n, p, l* and *t*. I have sometimes asked myself if it is possible that the Aryan sage Agastya, the Aristotle of South India, writing on every conceivable subject, and the reputed author of the Tamil alphabet, may in his southward journey have carried some immediate descendant of the Asoka alphabet like the Cave or the Chera script, and by adapting it to an already existing Tamil alphabet, formed the *Vatteruttu*. Or the *Vatteruttu* may have been the adaptation of some south Semitic alphabet, as very properly argued by Dr. Taylor, which must have found its way by sea to South India along with Phœnician traders, whose commerce with the Dravidians is said to have commenced so long ago as the eighteenth century B. C. A Semitic relationship is sought, among others, from the fact that in the *Vatteruttu* doubled consonants are written side by side and not like fractions as in the other scripts.

Dr. Taylor makes the following remarks, which throw considerable light on this subject. "The Southern Dravidian types," says he, "may be traced back to the Chera inscription of 467 A.D. From this lapidary alphabet two scripts were developed, a cursive and a literary script. The first is represented by the Tamil, while the other has developed into the Grantha or 'book' alphabet used by the Tamil Brahmans for Sanskrit transcriptions of their sacred books.....(this is the Koleruttu of Malayalam). The great Tamil alphabet occupies the extreme south of India.....The Tamil script presents one of the most curious problems in the history of the Indian

alphabets. Most of the letters are descended, like those of other Dravidian alphabets, from the character of the Western caves, but several letters have been shown by Dr. Burnell to be derived from the nearly extinct Vatteruttu, or 'round hand,' an independent alphabet known to us from inscriptions of the seventh century A. D. The Vatteruttu is apparently the survival of a very ancient cursive alphabet of unknown origin. It may have been derived from the primitive alphabet of India at a time prior to the redaction exhibited in the inscriptions of Asoka, or possibly it may have been an independent branch of the Semitic alphabet, introduced into Southern India by early Phœnician traders. Dr. Burnell doubts whether the *Maurya* (i.e., the Asoka) alphabet of the third century B. C., which was the parent of every other Indian alphabet, can have been the source of those of the Tamil characters which were derived from the Vatteruttu."

At the same time one cannot help remarking that, if the Tamils had borrowed their characters from the Asoka alphabet, they would have taken not merely the surds *k*, *ch*, *t*, *t*, and *p*, but also their corresponding sonants,—*g*, *j*, *d*, *th*, and *b*; and if they had thought that one character would do duty for two sounds (which is very improbable), it is puzzling to know why they made use of three characters for variations of the same *r* sound, three for *n*, and two for *l*; for the sonants are as much constituents of Tamil phonetics as the medials. And so far as the vowels are concerned, short *e* and *o* are peculiar to Tamil, while *au* is an evident interpolation; and yet the former two find a place in the Tamil vowel-system. These considerations seem to point to a non-Asoka origin for the Tamil alphabet. The early Tamil grammarians, including even Pavananti, the author of the *Nannūl*, speak habitually of only two Indian languages, the *Northern* and the *Southern*. By the northern they meant Sanskrit, and by the southern, Tamil. Not that they were unaware of the existence of the other Dravidian languages. They were quite aware of their existence, but very

properly styled them all *Kodun-tamil*, or corrupt Tamil—a fact which goes a great way to show that Tamil was the parent Dravidian language from which all the other South Indian languages branched off in course of time and formed new alphabets for themselves. The Tamils seem to have had a horror of foreign letters; for detailed rules are given according to which Sanskrit letters were to be converted into *bond fide* Tamil letters before they could be used in Tamil writing.

Let us now change our course and proceed downwards from the *Vatteruttu*. This is comparatively easy. We go with the current. The *Vatteruttu* belongs to the eighth century; that is, the alphabet derived from the inscription of that date. Let us pass three centuries of the stream of development and take note of the changes effected. As regards the vowels, short *e* and *o* are strangely missing. *A*, *a*, *u* and *o* assume a more modern form. *U* is lengthened by a small hook like superscript (1), which has been corrupted into *œ*. Among the consonants, the development is quite marked. With the exception of *k*, and *n*, all the rest have put on a modern garb. *D* needs just a little turning from the right upwards; the *k* and the *n* still resemble the Asoka characters. As regards animation the changes are certainly for the better. For *ā* the dash of the *Vatteruttu* has a perpendicular line added to it, like 1. The semi circle for *i* is turned downwards, while the prefix for the *e* is separated from the consonant. Two such prefixes or *kompuccuri* make up the *ai* sound, e.g., *dai* =  =  in modern writing. This gives us the origin of the symbol *œ*. The *Vatteruttu* forms are retained in the case of *n*, *l* and *r*. The form *œr* is only another way of writing *œr*. Long *o* simply prefixes *o* to the long *a* form. This improved alphabet is derived from an inscription of about 1080 A.D., round the base of the shrine of the great temple at Tanjore.

One more alphabet will suffice. It is derived from an inscription of 1456 A.D. In this the alphabet assumes its modern form, especially in the case of consonants. The only excep-

tions are that *nj* is slightly different, while a foot is added to final *n*. The *đ* in combination is either *σ* or *π*. The distinctions in character between short *e*, and long *ē* and short *o* and long *ō* are not yet marked. Beschi, the great Jesuit Tamil scholar, who resided in India two centuries later, mentions in his *Colloquial Tamil Grammar* that a dash over the consonant made the vowel long in quantity. He found this rather cumbersome and introduced a top curl in the *kompuccuri*, the present *c*, and thus rendered a great service to Tamil calligraphy. A similar dash still continues to be written over *π*, to change it into *σ*. We also meet with examples of abbreviated forms for doubled consonants, such as *சச*, *தத*, *பப*, *கக*; but these have not been adopted by Tamil printers.

But why were these changes made from time to time in Tamil alphabetic writing? This is a question that naturally suggests itself to the student. There is no doubt that among all writers there is a general tendency to improve the art, on the one hand, and lessen the labour of writing, on the other, by means of abbreviation and other artifices. It is generally acknowledged that the alphabets of the world are all derived from one or two ancient hieroglyphs, or picture alphabets. In an ingeniously derived genealogical tree, Dr. Taylor traces the descent of the English letter *M* from the Egyptian picture-writing for an owl. "It will be noticed," he says, "that our English letter has preserved, throughout its long history of 6,000 years, certain features by which it may be recognised as the conventionalized picture of an owl." And what is more surprising still is the fact that the Tamil character *ம* finds an honourable place in this tree.

Apart from this general tendency in the direction of elegance and brevity, there was another cause at work. In addition to the lapidaries and engravers whose labours gave a fixity (for a time at least) to alphabetic forms, the reed and the birch-bark in North India, and the famous iron style and the palmyra leaf in South India, have played an important part in the con-

tinued transformation of characters. Each writer had his favourite flourishes and finals, which contributed in no small degree to modify the shapes of letters, especially if he was a man of some note or position. Among other changes thus produced, the dot over the Tamil consonant, the *talaikkattu* or fork in the Telugu, and the horizontal and perpendicular lines in the Devanāgarī, have all "originated in the convenience of the scribe and subsequently seemed to show where the letter began, and ultimately became meaningless, both in the northern and southern alphabetic regions." The use of the style has also produced the cursive form of the Tamil alphabet, as straight lines when in contact with the course of the fibre in the palm leaf become more or less invisible.

The introduction of printing is a great advantage in resisting any further corruptions in the alphabet. The late P. B. Hunt of the American Mission effected a considerable improvement in Tamil typography, as may be seen in Winslow's Dictionary, which was printed at his press about 50 years ago. Tamil capitals are a great *desideratum*; and it is to be hoped that some enterprising type-founder may invent a simple capital-system for the Tamil alphabet. Even with this improvement, the present multiplicity of characters, resulting from a complicated method of consonant-animation, is certain to give way gradually to a simpler alphabet worthy of the twentieth century. I shall reserve further remarks on this question for the conclusion of the paper.

The arrangement of the Tamil alphabet seems to have been the work of native grammarians acquainted with Sanskrit alphabets. Nothing can be inferred on this point from the *Vatteruttu* inscription of the eighth century. The alphabet there invented, as it were, by the epigraphist is not found to exist. The first authentic reference to the alphabet is in the first *sūtra* of Tolkāppiyam. He says: "The letters so called are thirty, beginning with *a* and ending with *ṇ*, exactly as they are now." His constantly recurring phrase, *enmanār pulavar*



(so the learned say), whether it refers to his celebrated teacher Agastya, or to a number of grammarians, goes to prove that both alphabet and grammars had existed some centuries before the age of Tolkāppiyam. Anyhow the arrangement is evidently a Sanskritic one. With the exception of the last four consonants, *r*, *l*, *r*, and final *n*, peculiar to Tamil, the remaining fourteen consonants follow the order of the Sanskrit consonants. The redactor seems to have taken the initial and final only of each *varga* in their proper order, as being quite sufficient for Tamil phonetics, and then added on the four medials, *y*, *r*, *l*, and *v*. It was evidently a foreigner who assigned the last places to the distinctive Tamil consonants *r*, *l*, *r*, and *n*. The vowel arrangement is likewise in the Sanskrit order. The little used Tamil *aitam* is usually placed after the vowels. Though it seems a sort of substitute for the Aryan aspirate, it is fast becoming obsolete.

Though not in respect of arrangement, yet as regards its rejection of the remaining Sanskrit consonants and vowels and the consequent brevity of its characters, Tamil stands alone among the Dravidian alphabets, which display a most slavish imitation of the northern scripts—a fact which proves at once the antiquity and independence of the ancient southern tongue. The temptation to adopt a few convenient symbols for already existing sounds must at times have been almost irresistible; yet Tamil has held its own against the persistent efforts of successive redactors. It must, however, be added that Tamil has occasionally made use of a few Grantha letters, such as *sh*, *j*, *h*, *s*, and *ksh* in writing words of purely Sanskrit origin.

I proceed now to say something on the subject of Tamil phonetics. So far as the vowels are concerned, it must be admitted that they are a complete representation of all the Tamil vowel-sounds. The slight modification of *a* before certain finals, and of *i*, *ī*, and *e*, *ē*, before certain surd-consonants, need not be taken serious notice of. The wonder is, not that there are any modifications at all, but that those introduced are

so very few. But as regards consonant-sounds, it must be stated that, leaving out of account the twelve nasals and medials which have to express but one sound each, six surd-consonants are made to express thirteen distinct sounds; in other words, each has to do duty for two sounds with the exception of *c*, which is a symbol for three distinct sounds. For example, we have *kal* and *pagal*; *col*, *pachchai* and *nenju*; *pattam* and *kudam*; *talai* and *kadavu*; and *uppu* and *vambu*. It must not be forgotten that all these are pure Tamil words, and the sounds therefore are all native and not foreign. On this account the complaint is frequently heard, especially from possessors of Sanskritized alphabets, that the Tamil alphabet is phonetically erroneous and incomplete. The Telugus, for instance, call Tamil *aravam*, soundless, and thus reproach it for what they consider to be its phonetic defect.

Is the Tamil alphabet, then, to plead guilty to this charge—a charge, by the way, which is hurled against it by both friend and foe? By no means. Whatever may be the case with regard to Sanskrit words employed in Tamil, for which its alphabet is not certainly responsible, any more than for English or French phonetics, those soft Tamil sounds for which characters are wanting are so very natural to the Tamil tongue that in every right place in a word they readily suggest themselves. No Tamil children are taught the two sounds of *k* and of the other surds. They hear the pronunciation of the word in which the particular sound is represented and remember it once for all. When surds are preceded by their respective nasals, the Tamil tongue naturally utters the soft sound; since it is contrary to the genius of Tamil phonetics for surd sounds to combine with other nasals. No Tamil man would pronounce *sangu* as *sanku*, or *pāmbu* as *pampu*. A few rules as to change of sound would help even foreigners to overcome this seeming defect in the Tamil alphabet.

The sounds which foreigners find it most difficult to catch are the deep cerebrals and palatals. It seems a strange freak

of nature that in the extreme south of India, where Tamil was born and where it has flourished for thousands of years, its most characteristic letter, the deep *r*, and the final consonant of the name itself, should be mis-pronounced as a deep *l*, not by the illiterate merely, but by all the people without an exception! This has ever been a puzzle to me. If there had been no deep *l*, one might suppose that *r* was really *l*. But this is not the case. Has the Tamil race in the south degenerated so far as to be unable to articulate this characteristic letter of their ancestors? In lesson 41 of his *Handbook* Dr. Pope has fallen into a slight error in stating that "*r* is *y* in Madras, and that *kori* is *koyi*." For it is in Madras that the Tamils give the correct pronunciation of the letter. Dr. Pope must have heard the faulty pronunciation of his servants and other low-caste people, who invariably corrupt the *r* into *y*. Still the southern *l* for *r*, in speech, must ever remain a puzzle.

Are there any redundant characters in Tamil? As no Tamil letter can express the sound of another, the charge of redundancy cannot be made against the Tamil alphabet. There seems to be, however, a single exception. I say 'seems' advisedly. Final *n* and initial *n* are practically interchangeable. But the *Nannal* states expressly that while initial *n* is pronounced at the upper edge of the *teeth*, final *n* is pronounced at the palate. This is especially the case when it is in combination with the surd *r*. Strictly speaking, therefore, there is not a single redundant character in the Tamil alphabet. Each of the thirty symbols has its peculiar power and sound, except an occasional euphonic variation, arising from its position in a word or its contiguity to a related letter, and answering naturally to the phonetic necessities of the language. Compared with the English, the Tamil alphabet is a far more complete and consistent expression of the phonetic system of the Tamil people than the English alphabet is of the phonetic system of the English-speaking peoples of the world.

The Tamil numerals, which must be considered along with

be remembered, that, more than ever, time is money, and that therefore, time wasted is money wasted. Besides, Tamil has not, like the English alphabet, a running script for writing purposes. The whole character has to be bodied forth in writing; and this writing, when very fast, becomes the notorious chain-hand of cutcheries, illegible to all save experts—a system of writing which it is hoped, Government will ere long entirely do away with as a relic of barbarism.

Now, it is generally acknowledged that the Roman alphabet is well adapted, with the aid of a few typographical touches, to express all the sounds of all the Indian alphabets. It has proved a great success in Europe. Long ago English gave up its ancient alphabet and adopted the Roman. The Continental languages have followed suit. In my own time Danish has all but adopted the Latin characters. Already in India, Hindi and Urdu books have been printed in this character, and are said to be steadily increasing in popularity. Why should not a beginning be made with Tamil in South India? This is not the first time the Roman alphabet has been advocated for general use in this country of sixty alphabets. Eminent scholars have done so for many years. At present an Indian travelling in his own country from, say, Tuticorin to Calcutta, *via* Bombay and Delhi, gets quite perplexed at the variety of alphabets which meet his eye at the railway stations. With a single alphabet, he could at least spell out the names of towns and discover for himself the route along which he is pursuing his journey. But this is a mere trifle compared with the immense advantages that would accrue, in every way, to all parties concerned, from the adoption of the Roman alphabet. Infants would be saved the drudgery of straining their sight with a syllabary prodigiously long, and fearfully complicated. The labour of writing and composing would be greatly lessened. There would be considerable saving in the cost of copying and the production of books. The present waste of time would be avoided; books would be reduced in

the alphabet, cannot be traced further than the sixteenth century. The *Vatteruttu* inscription is destitute of numerals. The numerals of the sixteenth century are identical with the modern figures. The general belief at present is that India gave birth to numerical symbols. A comparison with the Cave characters favours the conjecture that the Tamil numerals have probably descended from them. But these are remarkably simple and primitive. The symbols for one, two, and three are merely as many horizontal strokes as the figures indicate. These have undergone many a rude touch until they have usurped the actual forms of Tamil letters. Thus the Tamil *ௐ* for 1 has nothing to do with the letter *k*. By a process of arbitrary addition and alteration, a mere horizontal stroke has developed into *ௐ*. And so in regard to the other figures. Tamil has no zero. This is an evident disadvantage. It has, however, a distinct figure for *ten*: ௐ which serves the purpose of the zero. The origin of this figure it is difficult to determine. But conjectures may be made. It looks like a corrupt form of the corresponding Cave numeral (L). There are also special characters for a hundred and a thousand. On the whole, it may be remarked that there is a family resemblance between the numerals of the East and West, which points to a common, though remote, origin for both. Such resemblance will be found to exist even between English and Tamil figures when closely examined. But Tamil numerals are now being given up for English.

I must now bring this paper to a close. But before I do so, one important matter deserves our consideration. It is well-known that notwithstanding all the merits and excellences of the Tamil alphabet, its complicated system of animation places it at a great disadvantage by the side of English and other European languages. The Tamil alphabet consists, indeed, of only thirty letters. But its method of animation creates at least 247 characters, which needlessly multiply the labour of the writer, composer, and type-founder. In this age of economy it must

bulk, for the smallest type that Tamil can ever make use of is the brevier. Foreigners beginning the study of the language would no more have to waste time on mastering its alphabet.

Only one objection of any weight has been made to this proposal. It is feared that the Tamil alphabet would in that case be forgotten, and posterity could not read newly discovered MSS. written in this alphabet. There is not the slightest fear of any such calamity. There would always exist scholars and antiquaries well versed, as at present, in deciphering ancient inscriptions; and the present alphabet is certain to be preserved in modern inscriptions if not in books now in use.

But there are practical difficulties to be met with at the outset. The great question is, Who is to lead the way? There are three ways in which a commencement might be made. First, Government might publish school readers in the Roman alphabet. Secondly, private publishing societies, like the Christian Literature Society, might co-operate with Government on the same lines. If these two bodies would combine, the success of the scheme would be ensured. But it is most likely that they would rather not move in the matter. In that case the only plan left would be for private enterprise to come forward. Popular stories and pamphlets of a cheap and interesting nature should be published in the new alphabet. It would certainly take some time before the alphabet became popular; but once it did, Government would be compelled to yield to the people's pressure and issue its vernacular publications in the Roman alphabet. The reform will require patient toil and unremitting effort. But only in this way can any reform be introduced.

## 2.—THE KURAL.

By way of introduction it may be stated at the outset that the Kural is a Tamil poem on ethical subjects, held in the highest estimation by the Tamil people. It is called the third

Veda, the first being the Veda properly so-called, and the second the Mahabharata with Krishna for its hero. No less than twelve commentaries have been written on this work by men representing different religious sects of Hinduism : the one written by the Brahmin Parimélaragar being the most popular. The text itself is simple and readily yields its meaning to the diligent student. But as there is a "pleasure in poetic pains which only poets know," so in this matchless piece of poetic effort there are depths of thought and heights of moral excellence which can only be perceived by those endowed with a sense for the true and the beautiful in life. Though universally known and frequently quoted, the Kural is not studied as intensely as it ought to be by the Tamil people. A few foreigners, however, have bestowed on its study a considerable amount of labour, time and thought. Among Frenchmen M. Ariel, among Italians Father Beschi, the greatest European Tamil scholar, among Germans Dr. Graul, and among Englishmen Ellis, Drew, Robinson and Pope have rendered valuable service by publishing partial or complete translations of the Kural and thus introducing it to the learned public of Europe. Mr. Drew carried his translation to the end of the 63rd chapter, and the writer of this paper may be pardoned for adding that he was the first to publish a prose rendering of the remaining seventy chapters. The late Dr. Bower was quite familiar with the poet, but unfortunately he did not commit to writing the results of his critical, life-long study of this great work. In his valuable Dravidian Comparative Grammar the late lamented Bishop Caldwell refers particularly to the Kural as the most ancient extant Tamil work and with great force of argument fixes the date of its composition at a period previous to the ninth century. A cheap and popular College edition of the Kural, with a faithful English version, as well as a Tamil paraphrase accompanied with notes both critical and grammatical, is a great want which it is hoped will ere long be supplied.

With these introductory remarks, we may proceed to consider more fully the authorship, style and subject-matter of the work before us. Very little is known regarding the author of the Kural. His very name has not been handed down to posterity. From time immemorial he has been described as Tiruvalluvar, the sacred Pariah priest. The Pariahs are divided into eighteen tribes, at the head of which stands the Valluvan. He is their priest, soothsayer and doctor. Unlike the hut of the Pariah, the Valluvan's house is quite close to, if not on the very border of or just within, the 'village' proper and not in the *cheri* itself. He wears a thread like the twice-born. His services as a doctor and astrologer are in great demand among the higher castes, who treat him with respect and receive him into their houses. With reading and writing, he is more or less familiar, while he repeats by rote a great deal of current learning and common *mantras*. His general appearance is so neat that even a practised eye fails to see the Pariah in him. To this tribe then did the author of the Kural belong. And ten centuries ago when the caste lines of demarcation were not so rigidly drawn as they are now, Tiruvalluvar must have enjoyed greater facilities for education, and more familiar intercourse with his superiors in caste, than is the case at present with his down-trodden castemen. A later tradition, however, makes the poet an illegitimate son of a Brahmin father and a Pariah mother,—evidently a foolish attempt to improve on the humble though purer ancestry of the Tamil bard. The words *Adi Bagavan* occur in the first distich of the Kural as an epithet of the Deity; and though the tradition would make it appear that *Adi* was the mother and *Bagavan* the father of the poet, it has utterly failed to alter the descriptive name of the poet, which still continues to be Tiruvalluvar.

The poet lived at St. Thomé or Mylapore, the [southern suburb of Madras, and earned his livelihood as a weaver. How a Valluvan could take to working at the loom, is to us



somewhat surprising. And surprising as this may be, it is still more surprising how a Valluvan weaver could win the hand of a Vellala maid of Cavrepauk. But so it was a thousand years ago. The poet is also said to have enjoyed the friendship and patronage of one Elélasingan, a wealthy fisherman of St. Thomé who owned a small vessel. With his wife Vasuki, therefore, the poet seems to have spent the greater portion of his life in this 'town of peacocks,' as the name Mylapore signifies, and gathered the materials for his immortal work, having probably as his contemporaries Charlemagne and the Caliph Haroun Al Raschid.

But whence did the poet gather his materials? This is an important question and no less interesting. The most natural source must have been the literature of his time. Being a Valluvan it is not possible, at all events not probable, that he could have acquired a knowledge of Sanskrit, so as to read for himself the Vedic and other ancient literature of India, in which the Code of Manu and the two great epics formed a prominent part. But he must have *heard* a great deal from the mouths of experts. And of what he had heard, the pithy little *slokas* with which Sanskrit literature abounds and which usually convey moral maxims in terse and concise language, must have made a lasting impression on his eclectic mind and perhaps even suggested the epigrammatic form in which he has composed his Kural.

Life in his time must, of course, have afforded his genius ample food for thought and reflection. Not far from his village was the Chola kingdom invariably at war with the Pandya's in the south. The follies and vices of the Kings, the early training and education of the Princes, the intrigues of their courts, the varied gifts and tactics of the Ministers, the frequent wars which laid the states in ruins, the contests of warriors who combated with the courage and skill of gladiators, the frequency of famines and epidemics, could not but have filled the poet's mind with anxious thoughts regarding royal rectitude and

the well-being of kingdoms. The Kural also bears testimony that the 'worker at the loom' was a close observer of life in its more familiar and humbler walks. The ascetic and the householder, the gambler and the drunkard, the farmer and the idler, the wedded husband and the unwedded lover, the devoted wife and the mercenary prostitute, the host and the guest, and parents and children do not escape the activity of his mind or the keenness of his eyes. Even nature, animate as well as inanimate, is laid under contribution. The roaring sea of St. Thomé beating with its creamy surf on the palm-grown shore, the hills and lakes, the brooks and rivers, the *topes* and groves in his neighbourhood, the flowers and herbs, the plants and shrubs, with the birds and animals of his country, the poet summons to his aid as he clothes moral 'dry bones' with life and beauty.

It is most likely that Tiruvalluvar with his active mind ever in quest of knowledge and bent on discerning truth from error, must have visited the last surviving University or College of Madura and witnessed the hair-splitting controversies of the proud arbiters of learning in that ancient seat of Shen-Tamil. The rival schools of religion and philosophy which were in his time fast developing into rival sects, the decline of Buddhism and the rise of Jainism, the unsuitability of the Vedic and Brahmanic cult to the simple tastes of the Dravidian farmer, the moral worthlessness of rites and ceremonies,—these the poet had carefully scrutinized and found utterly useless for the system he was daily elaborating in his humble cottage.

It is often urged, and with considerable force, that at least for the purer moral sentiments of the Kural, the poet is indebted to Christianity. "We may fairly picture him," writes Dr. Pope, the latest advocate of this theory, walking "along the sea-shore with the Christian teachers, and, imbibing Christian ideas, tinged with the peculiarities of the Alexandrian School, and day by day working them into his own wonderful Kural." Whether Christianity was first

planted at Mylapore by the Apostle Thomas in the first century, or by a namesake of his in the fifth, the fact remains undisputed that the poet's native village was the first spot in India on which Christian feet have trod. Undoubtedly then there was a Christian Church at St. Thomè in the days of Tiruvalluvar; but though he may have come in contact with Christians, it cannot fairly be inferred from this that he must have read the Scriptures or derived any knowledge from the Church regarding the teachings of Christ or His Apostles. For Popery had been fairly established at this period and the Bible had become a sealed book, while the general ignorance of Catholic Christians is a well-known fact. The Tamil bard could more easily have learned the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster or the Apostle's Creed than the Sermon on the Mount or any similar passage of Scripture on which so much stress is laid by the advocates of this theory, for it could not have been different then from what it is now as regards the Scriptural knowledge of Roman Catholics. Besides, the Kural betrays no traces of distinctively Christian ideas or ethics such as may be ascribed to Christ or His Apostles alone. None of the ten epithets by which the Deity is described in the opening chapter of the Kural have the remotest connection with Christ or God, that is to say, as they are designated in the Bible. The chapter on Killing deals exclusively with the literal taking away of life. That on Love is quite different from the Apostle's eulogium in 1 Cor. xiii. Of course, here and there, there are similarities of expression, nay even identical moral sentiments, but this is quite natural; for human nature is the same everywhere, and even oceans cannot separate kindred souls. Of one thing, however, we may be certain. In his daily intercourse with the Christians of Mylapore, which is quite probable, the poet must have observed the superior sanctity and attractiveness of a Christian home, which may have contributed in no small degree to the beautiful picture he has given us of a Tamil family.

When the work was completed the poet repaired, we are told, to Madura to secure for it the imprimatur of the College of Pandits there. The haughty professors, however, refused to review it as being the production of a Pariah. The author thereupon requested permission to place it on their 'divine seat' which was then afloat in a tank. The request was granted. But the seat immediately contracted itself to the size of the book and threw the professors into the tank. Shorn of all figure, the account means that it was far from easy for the humble poet to get his work acknowledged by the southern luminaries as one of intrinsic merit.

The poet's life was a poem in itself. The concurrent voice of various traditions bears testimony to the happy and exemplary life he led with his beloved Vasuki. She it was who had sat for the poet's portrait of the ideal wife. A pattern of perfect obedience and devoted virtue, she had never during her whole married life, questioned her lord's command. The night on which she died, the poet was heard to utter the following pathetic lines :

" O thou loving one, O sweet'ner of my food,  
O wife who ne'er transgressed my word,  
Who did'st chafe my feet, rising first and sleeping last,  
O when will these eyes know sleep again ! "

Vasuki's death affected the sage so deeply that he soon secluded himself from society and devoted the rest of his life to religious contemplation. At his death, his body was according to his expressed desire exposed in the open air outside the town to be devoured by crows.

" Though dead he yet speaketh." To think is to live ; and he by whom the reality and responsibility of life on earth was thought out in all its manifold bearings and aspects, still lives in the loving memory of millions. The despised Pariah has been raised to the highest pinnacle to which in the opinion of Hindus mortal man can rise : the Valluvan has become a

god : he is an incarnation of Brahma. Brahmin and Sudra alike raise their hands in devout worship to this 'divine teacher.' Ten centuries have not diminished the weight of his authority or the vitality of his utterances. He lives, and his fame will increase with the flight of time ; and so long as men continue to revere the true and the good will the words of the poet continue to inspire them, and gain him a seat with the great teachers of the world.

The Kural then is the work which this great teacher has bequeathed to posterity. Like its author, the work too is nameless. The name by which it is known, is simply the name of the metre in which it is composed. Several Tamil poets have since followed our poet's example, and named their works after their respective metres. The word *Kural* means *short*. The root is *Kur*, a purely Tamil primitive. But it has its cognates in Sanskrit and other Aryan languages, and is one of the many distinctively Tamil roots which unmistakably prove the great antiquity of the language and its intimate connection with some pre-Aryan tongue from which the Aryan, Semitic, and Turanian branches are generally held to have descended. But as applied to Tiruvalluvar's work, the term signifies a shortened form of the metre called *Venpa*. For the *Venpa* consists of four lines while the *Kural*, or *Kural-Venpa*, as it is properly termed, consists but of two. And it is quite probable that the poet's genius invented this couplet form as being the best fitted to convey his thoughts to his countrymen. It approaches the Sanskrit *sloka*, but is capable of clothing a perfect syllogism. The first line of each *Kural* contains four feet, and the second, three. With the exception of the seventh or last foot, the others may consist of two or three metrical syllables. And thus by a most skilful combination of these two kinds of feet (for which western prosody has no generic names), involving an endless variety of accent—of spondees and iambuses, trochees and dactyls, and a corresponding variety of rhythm and pause,

with a judicious introduction of rhyme and alliteration as well as a careful selection of soft and hard consonants,—the poet plays on his two-stringed harp with matchless power and grace, and adapts his notes to every mood of mind or emotion of heart he desires to awaken in our souls.

Both critic and commentator unite in saying that the object of the Kural is to enable men to live, that is to say, live in the truest and highest sense, reminding us, very feebly it may be, of the words of Jesus who says, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." And from the Kural itself it may be gathered that while modern science defines life as a struggle against death, Tiruvalluvar by anticipation defines it as a struggle against the "seven-fold births."

In carrying out this great purpose the poet naturally treads in the path of Indian philosophers, and undertakes to write of the well-known four great themes, *viz.*, Virtue, Wealth, Pleasure and Heaven. The last being beyond the pale of human knowledge and experience, he wisely omits; though incidentally he approaches it elsewhere with great yearning of soul. These four themes are called the Parama-parusharttham, *i.e.*, the highest objects of man's desire.

The plan of the Kural, therefore, is briefly as follows: first an Introduction of four chapters, followed by thirty-four on Virtue, both domestic and ascetic, seventy on Wealth, with twenty-five on Pleasure, making in all 133 chapters. Each chapter contains ten couplets. Thus there are altogether 1,330 distiches in the Kural. The late Mr. Scott of Madura recently published an edition of it with a re-arrangement of the plan and what he considered to be the necessary emendations of the text. But time will soon shew that it was a futile attempt. The Kural cannot be improved nor its plan made more perfect. It is a perfect mosaic in itself. The slightest change in the size, shape or colour of a single stone would mar the beauty of the whole. "Complete in itself," to quote the words of Dr. Pope, "the sole work of its author, it

has come down the stream of ages absolutely uninjured,—hardly a single various reading of any importance being found."

Before proceeding to consider the poet's treatment of each of these grand topics, we must dwell very briefly on the Introduction. The four chapters treat respectively of God, Rain, Virtue and Ascetics,—and form a fitting type of the whole. The very first couplet on God, which is also the first in the whole work, is characteristic of the man and marks him out as a shining monotheist in those dark ages.

"As all letters have A for their first,  
So the world has the Eternal God for its first."

Thus does the Valluvan begin his great work. In other words, the poet would join hands with Moses and say, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This is the nearest Indian parallel to Christian cosmogony. Rain finds a place in the Introduction, because then as now, it was indispensable to the well-being of mankind. The fact that eight out of ten distiches describe the evils of drought, indicates the frequency of famines even in the poet's days. The chapter on Virtue, or Righteousness in Scriptural language, is well worth study. He says :—

"To be spotless in mind is alone virtue,  
All else is evanescent show."  
"That alone is pleasure which flows from virtue."

The poet defines virtue and vice thus :—

"Virtue is what ought to be done,  
And vice what one ought to shun."

A careful perusal of the Kural will shew that in dealing with Virtue, Wealth and Pleasure, the poet takes up types of the greatest excellence in each department. The householder and the ascetic in the first, the king and his state in the next, and conjugal bliss in the last are selected as leading

ideals in the treatment and development of each of these subjects. The headings of the twenty-three chapters devoted to the portrayal of domestic virtue form as it were the main features of an excellent portrait. The house-holder, married not to a child-wife but to a frugal woman who is a meet help to his consecrated life, rejoices in the careful training of his children, through loving whom he learns to love his neighbour, is hospitable, given to kindly speech, grateful for benefits received, strictly just and upright in all his dealings, moderate and self-restraining, decorous in behaviour, faithful unto his wife, forgiving and forbearing, avoiding envy, covetousness, evil-speaking, even profitless gossiping, dreading evil deeds, always placing duty supreme, giving to the poor and preserving his good name. I doubt very much if anything could be added to enhance the beauty of this picture, especially as each of these features undergoes further and still finer touches from the poet's pencil. Sir Alex. Grant states that "humility, charity and forgiveness of injuries are not described by Aristotle." But it is these very qualities which are so forcibly and frequently inculcated by this Tamil bard. It is only the pen of a Drummond that could adequately bring to light the hidden beauty of his chapter on Love. One or two extracts will suffice :—

" He alone lives who loves."  
 " Nothing can restrain love,  
 The tiny tear will betray it."

To these may be added one from the chapter on Forbearance :

" Forgiving trespasses is good always,  
 Forgetting them hath even higher praise."

The substance of the first couplet in the chapter on Giving is simply " 'Tis more blessed to give than to receive."

Ascetics seem to have formed an important and revered class in the poet's days. For their guidance, therefore, he



lays down a special code, which might be called the higher virtue. In this section, certain virtues and observances are treated of. Taking away life, and flesh-eating are condemned, while benevolence, veracity and the like are commended. Referring to veracity, the poet says that "falsehood may be regarded as truth, if it yields guiltless good." This is the only instance in which the moralist leaves the intuitional platform and takes his stand on utilitarian ground. At all events, he acted up to his light.

The Jains claim the poet as belonging to their sect, because of his restrictions against killing and flesh-eating. But this cannot justify their claim. In these restrictions, he is laying down the law for the ascetic, not the ordinary house-holder. Besides people were mostly vegetarians then, as they are now; probably much more so. The abhorrence of flesh-eating and the slaughter it involves is common even now among vegetarians. And the poet simply gives expression to public opinion in this respect without necessarily attaching himself to the Jains or to their system of theology. And the only two allusions to be found in the Kural,—one to Indra and the other to Vishnu under the epithet Tirumal—could not have been acceptable to the Jains who disbelieved the myths alluded to. On the other hand, Tiruvalluvar seems to have been an eclectic philosopher, carefully discarding everything which had not a rational or moral basis. It is true he refers to Fate and Transmigration. But the former he regards in nearly the same light as Christian Providence, while the latter he seems to have accepted as a temporary solution of the problem of life. But as I have already remarked, escape from this "sea of seven-fold births" is the burden of his work.

We now come to Wealth, the second part of the Kural. The king and his country are the types in this section of the poem. The moral courage with which the humble poet ventures to frame laws for the well-being of the Chola and Pandyan kingdoms is certainly wonderful. It reminds one

of the Jewish prophets of old. The poet perceived that if he could lay down certain general principles the observance of which would be conducive to the material welfare of the state, their application to individuals and families would be apparent. And hence this section of the Kural is an exquisite poem on political economy, or the wealth of nations. It is on this section that the poet brings to bear his learning, his observation and his unerring judgment. In the seventy chapters of this part, a great variety of topics is treated of with the same force and beauty which characterize the former portion. Kingly greatness, learning, observation, good associations, deliberation, misplaced confidence, fortitude under affliction, power in speech and purity in deed, thought-reading, tact in society, are some of the qualities he enlarges upon as being essential ingredients in what might be called a public man. The essentials of a state are then dwelt upon. It is here we have the poet's beautiful chapters on Friendship, both good and bad. One or two couplets may be quoted :

" The friendship of the wise increases like the waxing moon ;  
That of fools diminishes like the waning moon."

" True friendship dwells, not in the sweet smiles of the face,  
But in the sincere smiles of the heart."

" Seek to gain the friendship of the pure ;  
But renounce even with a gift, that of all others."

A whole chapter is devoted to Conscientiousness. Here are a few quotations :

" Food, clothing and the like are common to all ;  
But conscientiousness is peculiar to the good."

" The conscientious will rather lose their life for their conscience,  
Than lose their conscience for their life."

" The poor," said Christ, " ye have always with you." It was so indeed in Tiruvalluvar's times. He too, in an appendix, speaks of poverty and begging ; the latter, however, he condemns. He says,

" Even thin gruel is ambrosia to him  
Who has earned it by labour."

With reference to royal greatness he says,

“ He is a lion among kings who possesses  
An army, people, wealth, minister, friend and fort.”

There are some beautiful verses on Fortitude. For example,

“ He has no sorrow in sorrow,  
Who seeks no pleasure in pleasure.”  
“ Sorrow flees before him  
Who can tickle trouble into joy.

Regarding sins of omission and commission, the following I think cannot be surpassed :

“ He dies who does what is not meet ;  
He also dies who does not what is meet.”

Indeed, such verses are so very numerous that it is difficult to make a selection. And translation is often a hopeless task. The words indeed may be rendered, and to a great extent, the sentiments also. But to reproduce the beauty, the rhythm and the terseness of a couplet is simply impossible. The translator must himself be a poet. As has been well remarked, each couplet is, as it were, “ an apple of gold in a network of silver.”

The third part of the Kural, that on Pleasure, has been much animadverted upon. Fifty years ago Mr. Drew said that it could not be translated without “ exposing the translator to infamy.” Public opinion, however, has greatly changed since that time. Dr. Graul has not only rendered it into German and Latin, but has said something in praise of its intrinsic excellence. The fact is, as I have already pointed out, the poet chooses types and ideals for the elucidation of his themes. When about to explain the nature of true pleasure, he perceives with the Christian poet that domestic felicity is the “ only bliss that has survived the fall.” Even the Apostle Paul could find no better analogy for the union of Christ and His Church than that of wedded love. Dr. Pope thinks “ he will be regarded as having done good service” in translating it. It

was one of the couplets in this part of the poem, referring to the two looks of a maid—the one which kills and the other which cures the looker—that led Dr. Graul to admire Tamil poetry and study the Kural.

At the same time it must not be forgotten that ancient writers were far less reserved in their style of writing on such subjects than is the case with modern authors ; and that almost all Eastern literature is, more or less, tainted with an excess of liberty in this particular. Still, it must be stated to the credit of the poet that this section is perfectly pure in its tendency, though its style is different from that of the other portions. It embodies no rules for conduct. On the contrary, by a few scintillations of poetic fancy, it aims at giving the reader a vivid though distant glimpse of the perfect bliss of conjugal life. It consists mainly of soliloquies and dialogues, and embraces unwedded as well as wedded love for both forms of union were permitted in the poet's days. But of the twenty-five chapters, only eight are devoted to unwedded love—or the *gandharva* marriage as it is termed by Indian writers—thus indicating the decided opinion of the poet who in the 8th chapter makes the unwedded union end in wedded love. A few couplets may be quoted in illustration of what has been said :

- “ Ah, woe is me ! my might that awed my foeman in the fight,  
By lustre of that beaming brow borne down lies broken now.”
- “ I look, but her eyes are on the ground the while ;  
I look away and she looks on me with timid smile.”
- “ If it is not parting, speak to me ; but if 'tis quick return,  
Speak to those who can survive till then.”
- “ Like the eye which sees not the pencil which paints it  
I cannot see my beloved's faults when I meet him.”

But, it may be asked, May this portion be read by the young ? I should say, No ; no more than other eastern books, including even the old Testament, can be placed in their hands without injuring their immature minds.

We have thus cast a hasty glance at the contents of this remarkable work. It now remains to offer a few remarks on its general style and language. The Kural is composed in the purest Tamil. In about 12,000 words which the poet has employed to convey his thoughts, there are scarcely fifty of Sanscrit origin. He throws the purity of Bunyan's English completely into the shade. No known Tamil work can even approach the purity of the Kural. It is a standing rebuke to modern Tamil. Tiruvalluvar has clearly proved the richness and power of his mother-tongue. And while the composition of a master-piece like the Kural so many centuries ago demonstrates the great antiquity and careful culture of the Tamil language, it is sad to reflect on the condition to which this great vehicle of thought has degenerated in these days, with neither poet to sing, nor moralist to teach,—especially when during this same period a new language—that of Great Britain—has arisen and developed into a perfect tongue, and bids fair ere long to occupy the greater part of the globe.

Regarding the Kural as a whole, there is but one opinion as to its surpassing excellence. Both European and Indian have written in the highest praise of it. In a little work, usually attached to native editions of the Kural, and called the Garland of Tiruvalluvar, there are fifty-three verses attributed to the discomfited professors of the Madura *Sangam* or College, in each of which every variety of hyperbole is exhausted by the author in his praise of the poem and the poet. The latter is called God, the first of poets, the divine poet, Brahma, Lakshmi's consort, &c.; while the former is termed the Triple Treatise, the Later Veda, the Word of God, the Word of Truth, the Tamil Vedam, and the World's Book. One of these critics says of it that it is a semi-perforated mustard seed into which the poet has emptied the contents of the seven seas. He refers of course to its *multum in parvo* characteristic. Most of these critics also refer to the chapters as well as sections as these have come down to us. From these again it appears that the

poet flourished in the reign of one Ugravarudi, a Pandyan king; but his date is not exactly known. It must be about two thousand years ago.

A European estimate of this work cannot be out of place here. Dr. Barth in his "Religions of India" refers to it as that "admirable collection of stanzas in the Tamil language which is instinct with the purest and most elevated religious emotion." M. Ariel, the French translator, calls it "the master-piece of Tamil literature"; and adds, "that which above all is wonderful in the Kural is the fact that its author addresses himself, without regard to castes, people or beliefs, to the whole community of mankind; the fact that he formulates sovereign morality and absolute reason; that he proclaims in their very essence, in their eternal abstractedness, virtue and truth; that he presents, as it were, in one group, the highest laws of domestic and social life; that he is equally perfect in thought, in language, and in poetry, in the austere metaphysical contemplation of the great mysteries of the Divine nature, as in the easy and graceful analysis of the tenderest emotions of the heart." Yes, it is a wonderful work, second only to that other Eastern literature which has received the impress of the Divine mind. Tiruvalluvar seldom discusses; he speaks with authority; his utterances are all *ex cathedra*. All his appeals are to the human conscience straight and direct. In the Veda, in the Code of Manu, and in the great Epics, the chief aim is the exaltation of the Brahmin; in the Kural, it is the exaltation of *man* as such, the race as a whole. The very ideal of the perfect man which he presents, according to the light he has received from Him "who lighteth every man that cometh into the world," cannot fail to inspire men of any creed or clime with purer motives for conduct and nobler aspirations for life.

The one great defect of the Kural—and it is one which belongs to every unaided human effort—is its conception of God. It is true the poet does not speculate; but he oscillates

between the personal and impersonal idea in the solitary chapter he devotes to the "praise of God." In one couplet he speaks of God as one devoid of desire and aversion, in another he gives Him eight attributes, while in a third he calls Him the destroyer of the five senses. It could not have been otherwise. The poet, though a giant in the moral world, was after all a child in the spiritual, with his foot on its threshold "seeking the Lord if haply he might feel after Him and find Him." "'Tis Revelation alone satisfies all doubts." In the chapter on Renunciation, there is a remarkable verse in which the yearning soul seems to gain a glimpse of the faith by which the "just shall live." It runs thus :

"Cling to that which He to whom  
Nought clings, hath bid thee cling,  
And cling to that bond to free thyself  
From every clinging thing."

In other words, the poet would say, "To get rid of sin, cling in faith to the Sinless One."

In conclusion, it is refreshing to think that a nation which has produced so great a man and so unique a work cannot be a hopeless, despicable race. The morality he preached could not have grown except on an essentially moral soil. To those therefore who labour for the salvation of the Tamil people, the Kural must be a work of peculiar, nay, intense interest. To move, to persuade, to convince the poet's countrymen, the popular reformer or preacher must be perfectly familiar with the Kural, so that from their own *vedam* they may be led to seek that ideal, perfect Man, whom not having seen but instinctively feeling after, the poet has sought to sketch in his immortal work, which, in the words of an ancient Tamil critic is,

"Sweet to the thought, sweet to the ear,  
Sweet to the mouth, and which with tongue  
Right eloquent, Tiruvalluvar set forth,  
That we the way of good may know."

## 3.—TAMIL PROVERBS.

THE Tamil language abounds in proverbs. The people take special delight in quoting them. The fact that about 9,500 old sayings and similes are published in this work\* proves the richness of Tamil proverbial literature. No one can speak to a Tamilian without coming across a proverb or two. This is especially the case with Tamil women. Whether for purposes of approval or rebuke, satire or appeal, figure or illustration, truth or precept, or even mere negation or assertion, a proverb is ever at their command. Old women are so very familiar with them that they often argue by means of proverbs. Even 'yes' and 'no' are expressed in similes. This desire on the part of the people for the constant use of proverbs in ordinary talk, on the one hand, and the wealth of their poetic as well as proverbial literature, on the other, indicate the great antiquity and poetic nature of the Tamil people. It is said that the members of the Madura College used to ask and answer questions in perfect verse.

This Dictionary contains about 9,500 proverbs. This is certainly more than most other languages can boast of. Still, I believe there must be at least three thousand more proverbs current among the people. I have seldom returned from a preaching tour in the villages without a few new sayings in my pocket book. Even while the work was going through the Press, about 300 new proverbs were collected from living sources. Like old and defaced coins, they are scattered about the country, and no diligent student will regret his search after these traces of Tamil wit and wisdom. The total number of Tamil proverbs cannot be less than 12,000.

A proverb has been defined as the "wisdom of many and the wit of one." Ray, who was the first to publish a complete list of English proverbs, defines a proverb as "a short sentence

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\* This was originally written as an Introduction to the author's *Dictionary of Tamil Proverbs*.



or phrase in common use, containing some trope, figure, homonym, rhyme or other novelty of expression." The Tamil word for proverb means simply "an old saying"; which is in itself an excellent definition.

The most usual, and, in my opinion, the best form of a Tamil proverb is an iambic tetrameter, with a rhyme in the first and third feet. Thus, *agattil aragu mugattil teriyum*; the beauty of the mind is seen in the face. Sometimes alliteration takes the place of the rhyme, as in the following: *kaytta maram kalladi padum*; it is the tree laden with fruit that is pelted with stones. The saying may be destitute of both these ornaments, as in, *aru kadantal ni yar, nan ar?* after the river is crossed, who are you and who am I? Still there is a rhythm which gives it grace and smoothness. Some proverbs are also double tetrameters, while others again are simple dimeters. But whatever form a proverb may assume, there is always something peculiar in its construction—which distinguishes it from an ordinary Tamil sentence.

Tamil proverbs have mostly a grammar of their own. Their grammar is chiefly poetic, though often it is also colloquial. The subject and predicate are frequently transposed, case-endings and other particles omitted. There are proverbs in which the subject or predicate is understood. Even corruptions are admissible. It will sometimes be very difficult to make out the case of a noun, especially when there are two or more in the same saying. The passive voice is conspicuous by its absence. It is quite repugnant to the genius of the language. Occasionally even rare words will be met with. To foreigners, therefore, the study of this literature will prove an excellent aid in mastering the principles of colloquial grammar, which is after all the grammar of nine-tenths of the people.

As regards antiquity, Tamil proverbs may be divided into three classes, *viz.*, ancient, middle-aged and modern. Ancient proverbs consist entirely of pure Tamil words without any mixture of Sanskrit. These make up a large proportion, and

embrace, for the most part, the opinions, ethics, and customs of the ancient Tamil people. Some of them are so very ancient that some of the words employed are now obsolete. In these no trace of Brahmanical influence can be found. It must be remembered that the Tamil people are converts to Brahmanism, or rather Hinduism as it is now called. Proverbs which have come into use after this conversion belong to the middle ages, and, as may be expected, contain a large number of Sanskrit words. These, however, are not more than a few hundred. A careful study of them will show that the popular verdict is not quite in favour of the Aryan cult. Modern proverbs are still fewer. They relate chiefly to political and agricultural subjects. Some famous Mussulmans and Europeans have been the occasion of a few sayings which by the way reflect little or no credit on them.

An enquiry into the teaching of these proverbs ought to find a place in this introduction. Taken all in all, this branch of Tamil literature may be called an encyclopædia of Tamil wisdom. They deal with almost every conceivable subject under the sun. Nothing worthy of note seems to have escaped the insight or scrutiny of the Tamil observer. God and man, beast and bird, trees and plants, morality as it affects every condition of life and society, the various departments of human industry and activity, domestic and social relationships, the spheres of hygiene and economy, manners and customs, common sense and worldly wisdom, human follies and vices, and others too numerous to mention, have become the origin of many a pithy proverb.

On the all-important subject of morality, their message is as noble as it is wide, as lofty as it is deep. The realm of motives has not been left unexplored by the wise among the Tamil people. The second table in the decalogue has been fully anticipated. As regards positive virtues, they speak in no uncertain tone. "Where there is love, even the impossible becomes possible." "The meek shall rule the earth." "Benevolence

has ruined none in the world." "There is no heaven to those who are merciless." "If you want heavenly bliss, give up sensual pleasure." "Waste not even a moment." "Greatness is always humble." "The industrious will never be disgraced." "A tree shelters him who fells it." "Virtue is its own reward." "Silence is worth a thousand." "Though it be medicine, share it with a guest." "Is a flower to be squeezed and smelt?" "The tears of the poor are like a sharp-edged sword." These are only a few picked up at random.

But what have these proverbs to say about God? Very little indeed. There are more sayings on demons than the Deity. While it is strange that they say so little about their Maker, it must be said to the credit of the Tamils that they have not speculated, like their Aryan proselytizers, on a subject about which they could know or learn little or nothing. The fact that the Tamil word *Kadavul* (God) does not once occur in the whole range of this literature proves its comparatively recent origin. In the few proverbs which antiquity has bequeathed to us, the term for God is *Aiyan*; as in *Aiyan alanta padi*, *cakku pōkku cellatu Aiyan mun*, and *Aiyan amaippai aralum tallak kūdatu*; as God has decreed; no excuses will avail with God; no one can violate God's order. The other sayings in which a Sanskrit term, *Teyvam*, is employed, belong to the middle period. *Aiyan*, then, is the ancient Tamil term for God. It is derived from *Ai*, a father, *an* being the masculine termination. Thus God was the Father, *par excellence*, to the Tamil people. Their theology was of the simplest kind. They believed in a moral Governor of the Universe, whose will was law, whose decrees were irrevokable and whom they called their Father—a fact over which Professor Max Müller would have rejoiced with all his heart. There are indeed a few sayings of the middle period in which *Aiyanar* is used as a term for an inferior god usually so-called. Compare the following: "He is present before we think (of Him) and grants what we

desire." God is also called *Talaiwan*, the Chief One, and *Munnavan*, the First One, as in *Tannai arintavan Talaiwanai arivan*; he who knows himself will know God; and *Munnavanē mun ninral mudiyata porul undo*; if God be with us, what is impossible?

Next to theology comes ethics. Like the former, the latter was exceedingly simple. There is no reference in the ancient proverbs to Vedas or Shastras. The light of conscience seems to have been their only guide. It would have been well if these people had been left to their simple beliefs and practices. Conscience they call *nenju*. *Nenjariyap poy collalama?* Can you lie against your conscience? *Kuttramulla nenju kuru kuru ennum*; a guilty conscience cannot keep quiet. But it was very difficult for them to follow this good monitor within. There are many sayings which refer to this universal weakness. "If you speak the truth, you become an enemy of the village." "Seek the approval of your conscience, not that of the village." "Even in a healed sore, there will be some matter left." "Conscience makes cowards of us all." "Fear guilt." "Rather die than lose your honour." It is no wonder that in later days when earnest and truth-seeking Tamil poets came to think for themselves and found no proper remedy for sin, they sang in the way they did and declaimed against the empty ceremonialism and idolatrous practices of their countrymen.

Regarding the wisdom and general good sense of the Tamilians their proverbs afford abundant proof. The results of their ripe experience and careful observation they have embodied in sayings which have seldom been surpassed for their beauty or force—not to speak of the rare truths they convey. Here are a few. "Though the rain has stopped, the tree rain has not." "You can stop a boiling pot, but not the mouth of the village." "A king and fire are alike." "Desire has no limit." "Cupid has no eyes." "There is no cure for the disease called desire." "The bullock thinks of its pain, the crow thinks of

its hunger." "There is neither birth nor diminution without a cause." "What is known to one is private, what is known to two is public." "What is not pinched with a nail must be split with an axe." "Do you need a mirror to look at a sore in the hand?" "What the eye sees, the hand can do." "Sandal-wood, even when rubbed down to a stick, will not lose its fragrance." "To the cow on this bank, the other looks greener." "No pains, no gains." "Do not give up the good for the sake of the old." "One snake knows another's foot-prints." "The poison of a snake is in its fangs, but that of a prostitute is all over her body." "The hare which has escaped is a great one." "If you write 'sugar' and lick it, will it taste sweet?" "Reciting the Vedas before a springing bull." "Having swallowed a mountain and brought forth a mouse." "The idle barber shaved his wife." "One's mouth makes one great or small." "For the friendship of two, the patience of one is necessary." These will suffice. Comment is needless.

A great many proverbs, again, are flashes of wit or sarcasm. I am inclined to think that such proverbs have mostly originated with women. There is a great deal of brilliant humour hidden beneath the mild and simple countenance of a Tamil woman, which can only be known to those who are familiar with Tamil people of both the sexes. The people as a rule delight in sarcasm, and seldom quote a proverb but to hit it off on the opponent. Indecent haste, for example, is ridiculed by the following; "Undressing oneself when the river is still ten miles off." One who is prone to extremes is compared to the "barber who either shaves the head clean or leaves the tuft (kudimi)." "Gauging the depth of the sea with a fox's tail." "Selling grass in a flower market." "He is willing to cross the sea, but he has no legs to cross the drain with." "When I say, 'come to dine,' you come to box." "The mouth is sugar-cane, the hand is iron." "When the house is on fire, he wants to light his cigar." "Like sinking a well to put out a fire." "He offered the Asvamedha sacrifice in an uninhab-

ited village." "Half an anna whip for a thousand rupees horse." "Going for the gift of child-birth and giving up her husband." Shakespeare's remark that the "apparel oft makes the man" applies with much force to these proverbs, for the terse and beautiful language in which they are clothed is entirely lost in the translation.

The picture portrayed by these proverbs, exhibiting both the dark and bright sides of woman, would make an interesting study. Let us first glance at the bright side of the picture. "A wife is the ornament of the house." "A house without a wife is a burning ground." "Even the devil will pity a woman." "What can the farmer do? The blessing belongs to her who holds the pot." "A wife is her own dowry." "A woman who gives her daughter for a wife is like God who gives a pair of eyes." "A house without the creeper (called) wife is a desert." "A man without a wife is only half a man." "Punish your son, but be kind to your daughter." It must be observed that all this praise is bestowed on woman in her capacity of wife. For the unmarried woman, their feeling is one of pity and blame. Marriage is the *summum bonum* of woman; not to realize this "chief end" of her is a curse and a calamity. On the other hand, feminine defects also find their expression in many apt and unkind sayings. "Don't confide your secrets to your wife." "A woman's thoughts are after-thoughts." "A working woman's pretext is her child." "Never listen to your wife's counsel." "Moderate food is becoming to a woman." "Rather give room to a devil than a woman." "A mother-in-law for a girl and a tutor for a boy." "Mother first and then wife." "A woman of fifty must bend her knees before a boy of five." "All married women are not wives."

The east is notorious for the ill-treatment of a young wife by her mother-in-law. Early marriage is the cause of this great evil. The girl-wife, unable to keep house for herself, has to undergo training under her mother-in-law. The consequent

animosity between the two, therefore, has given rise to scores of proverbs. Some belong to the mother-in-law, and others to the daughter-in-law. And they are well balanced. "What the mother-in-law breaks is an earthen pot, what the daughter-in-law breaks is a gold vessel." "When will my mother-in-law die, and I shall be rid of my sorrow?" "Though my mother-in-law may become friendly, her rice-pot will not." Now for the mother-in-law's aphorisms! "Never mind if my son dies, my daughter-in-law must become a widow." "The mother who nursed has become a Mûdevi (goddess of misfortune), and the wife who spread her cloth has become a Cidevi (goddess of fortune)." "There were tears in her eyes six months after her mother-in-law's death." "Though a daughter-in-law of gold, she needs at least a mother-in-law of earth."

From the number of proverbs that are current regarding Brahmins and Pariahs, the two extremes of modern Tamil society, and other classes such as Tradesmen, Shepherds and Artisans, I infer that by far the greater portion of these sayings were uttered by the great body of Tamil farmers, known otherwise as the Vellâlas of South India. They are the backbone of the Tamil nation. Though homage continues to be paid to the Brahmin, the proverbs relating to him give the lie to it. They are either sarcastic or disrespectful. For example, "Like the Brahmin woman who has lost her salted meat." "Are there poor among Brahmins and cows?" "Avoid a Brahmin's service." "Six Brahmins have (only) two eyes." "The Saiva Brahmin freely eats, but the mendicant has to fight." "Are there gentle cows and meek Brahmins?" As may be expected, Tamil opinion of Pariahs is by no means favourable. "Pariah work is half work." "Pariah judgment is half judgment." "Even if a Pariah child is sent to school, it cannot be cured of its ugly accent." "Pariah song and Pariah talk, like the Curai flower, are destitute of fragrance." But in their more sober moments they think better of them; for, "For fresh

paddy one may serve even a Pariah." "If a Pariah makes an offering, will not God accept it?"

A great deal also may be learnt from these sayings regarding the ancient condition and civilization, and manners and customs of these interesting people. An oven consists of three stones. Rice is their staple food. They also use ragi. A boy marries the daughter of his paternal aunt or maternal uncle. The wife eats what the husband leaves. Alms-giving is a favourite custom, and beggars are feasted on new moon days. Their widows do not marry. They have dramatic performances. They make a large use of home remedies and have not much belief in the doctor; for "he who has killed a thousand lives is half a doctor." July and August are the sowing season. "A man without clothes is half a man." They have a great dread of the tax-collector. Famines were of frequent occurrence, "when children were sold." Otherwise they had twenty-one rains in the year. They were quite familiar with gold and silver, copper and brass, iron and lead, and even struck their own coins. Their dead, they both buried and burnt. For "habits formed in the cradle last till (you reach) the burning ground;" and "a child in the grave is a child in the womb." At funerals they paid women to weep and beat their breasts. Strange to say, even Sati seems to have been forced upon them; they ask, "Will she who cannot bathe in tepid water ascend the funeral pile?" The country was infected with robbers, in spite of which they devoted themselves to the acquisition of wealth and learning. They performed pilgrimages (of course after conversion to Brahmanism), but the general opinion was unfavourable. "Though I have been to Cási, my sin has not gone." Their women are fond of jewels, for "adorning the ear beautifies the face." They bathe before their meal; for "though it is ragi pottage, drink it after a bath; though it is a rag, wear it after washing it." They were ruled by kings who wore crowns, held sceptres, imposed taxes and protected their subjects, but



were very changeable in their moods. They were not so far civilized as to commit suicide. They ask, "Who would wilfully poison himself?" They delighted in different kinds of chase, and were quite familiar with swords and spears, bows and arrows. They rode on horses and elephants and owned ships, boats and rafts. They were given to demonolatry and devil dancing. These outlines may be easily filled up as one likes by a further study of this literature.

This literature is also an excellent store-house for the notions, beliefs and superstitions of the Tamil people. It affords a clear insight into their innermost thoughts and indicates the height to which they have risen in the exercise of their judgment. The following proverbs may serve as specimens. "Cakes of ashes for coins of earth." "The minister foretells future events." "Medicine is one-fourth, common sense three-fourths." "Numberless persons have died from draughts of fancied milk." "Young fish need no instruction in the art of swimming." "Never draw on your capital." "First catch the goat and then the cow." "To look (well), one needs a thousand eyes." "No *guru* can change character." "Pride is a basketful, but if it is well-shaken, there will be nothing left." "The goddess of fortune resides in the foot that walks, that of misfortune in the foot that keeps still." "A bad man will not reform, though he bathes in the Ganges." "It is a disgrace to be fed by one's children." "The lips drop fruit, while the mind burns with rage"

Now for a few of their superstitions. "Passion at thirty, and refinement at forty." "A dog's nature at forty." "The tenth child lays the mother on the bier." "It is a great luck if the fifth born is a girl." The eighth child should not be a daughter; also the fourth. "Poisons cannot kill the godly." "A slender person is venomous." "Knowledge at fifty, modesty at sixty and nothing after that." "Don't set out on a Tuesday." "If the mother dies, the father becomes an uncle." "A fatal malady will not yield to medicine." "Gold

may be lent, but not flowers." "There is luck when sneezing is returned." "Though your bath may remove the oil, it cannot get rid of the writing." This refers to Brahma's writing on the forehead. "No feast, no friendship," applies to Tamil as well as other nations. "Feed kites even by begging." "If you eat *trash*, you will live a hundred years," is a maxim which is open to question. "Those who have a disease, have a demon," expresses the impatience and fretfulness of a patient. "Though a woman may resemble a celestial, clad in cloth upon cloth, if she can write, she must be rejected," condemns female education in strong language. Their partiality for male children is implied in the following question, "Is the child (only) a span, is it not a male child?" "Medicine must be given till the life departs" shews Tamil faith in the efficacy of medicine. Saturday, with them, is always an unlucky day; and Saturn, who presides over this day, is the chief god of evil. This superstition has given rise to many sayings of the middle period. "A woman under the influence of Saturn cannot get a husband even in the weekly market." "A death on a Saturday will be followed by many deaths." "Bathe every Saturday"—as if to wash off the evil of the whole week. Belief in Yama, the Hindu Pluto, has given expression to many current sayings. A clever man is said to "make a cake even of Yama, if he has a good opportunity." "What is there between a Samana Sanyasi and a dhoby?" None; because the former always goes naked. The Jains kill no living thing; and so they speak of a "cloth-louse in the hand of a Jain," meaning thereby that even an evil person may obtain protection. When something essential has been omitted, they say, "He forgot to tie the *tâli* (the Indian equivalent for the ring) in the noise of the wedding.' They marry their daughters before their sons; for they ask, "Is the son to be married while there is a maid in the house?" Something very rare is compared to the sight of the "first crescent in Karthikay (November—December)."

The Tamil people seem to have been addicted to bigamy. One of two wives calls the other "joint house-holder," which is now a term of abuse.

The fact that they have as many as fifty sayings about thieves shews that theft must have been quite a common calamity among them. The thief's wife as well as the thief goes in for shares in these sayings.

There is such a thing as caste-keeping in Tamil proverbs. Lord Chesterfield went even further; for he deprecated the very mention of proverbs in company. It marked ill-breeding. As education advances the use of proverbs decreases. This is the tendency of the times. In educated circles proverbs are but rarely quoted. The tendency is rather in the line of uttering new aphorisms than quoting old ones. Tamil people, however, have not yet attained to this desirable stage of education. Hence their free and frequent use of old sayings. But in a caste-ridden country like India, one may expect the spirit of caste to affect even the choice and use of these sayings. Certain proverbs are confined, in use, to certain classes, and if uttered in the presence of others, would be considered an insult. Certain proverbs, again, are current only among certain castes or out-castes, such as artisans, smiths, merchants, &c. Proverbs in use among women are quite out of place among men. Still it is true that some of these sayings have gained such force as universal truths that their use has gradually extended to the whole nation. But this is only an exception to the rule. Foreigners who are not aware of this caste-spirit as regards the use of proverbs, after they have learnt a score or two, begin to use them without discrimination, without regard to time, place and circumstances; this often excites the ridicule of the people whose instincts on this point are unusually keen. For example, a saying like, "He who has the Pálar will not be afraid of a guest," can have no force among those who have not seen or heard of this river. It belongs to a class of local proverbs.

"If gold and cloth are removed, a woman is but a nest of filth," cannot with propriety be quoted in refined society. A Brahmin would close both his ears against a proverb like, "Though one may eat flesh, is it necessary to wear the bones as a garland round one's neck?" Nor would a Pariah profit by being told that "He speaks with gingely seeds and water in his hand." Likewise, what foreigner can understand the meaning of "what has been done in the little room will be revealed in the Srimantam," unless both the custom and the ceremony alluded to in the saying are fully explained to him? "Test the good by their tongue and gold by the touch alone" has its origin in the goldsmith's craft. "The equivalent proverb for 'doing a great evil in secret' cannot be uttered in any respectable company.

Speaking of caste among proverbs, it is worthy of notice, that caste among the people, as now understood and practised, was quite unknown in pre-Aryan days. There is no Tamil word for 'caste'; nor are there any references to the institution except in modern sayings, where Sanskrit terms, such as *jati*, *varna* and *kula* are employed. In *Inattai inam taruvum*, relatives embrace each other, the reference to relationship is unmistakable.

Certain proverbs are also allusions to well-known stories and characters. Even Indian myths have given rise to a few. In the following there is allusion to two famous personages. "In society he is a Nakkiran, in rule, a Vichcheran." "Cupid's eyes are everywhere," is another way of describing his blindness. "As if Saguni appeared before the Pandus," illustrates the appearance of a new foe. "What was Sita to Rama?" refers to the ignorance of a stupid listener. "The birth of Sita was the destruction of Lanka" needs no comment. The application is no less plain. Place cannot make the man; for "Though a crow of Srirangam, can it say 'Govinda'?" "Festivals are held as long as Perumal exists," explains the origin of religious feasts. "Montgomery came and it rained

gold," is an allusion to Governor Montgomery; while "Elliott's concubine, she is so tender and nice," is a similar allusion, but reflecting discredit on the latter's character. Of the unfortunate they say, "Though Kuvera's city may be plundered, the unfortunate will not get even a ladle-stick." No one will injure an honest man; for "Though Elelasingan's goods go across the seven seas, they will return safely"; Elelasingan was the merchant friend of Tiruvalluvar. "Ravana Sannyasi" means a religious hypocrite. The allusion is to Ravana's disguise as Maricha in the presence of Sita. There are several allusions to Rama descriptive of friendship and faithfulness. Immediate profits are illustrated by the saying "The worship of Ganapati pays at once." "Desing's heaven" alludes to a recent well-known historical event. A fomenter of dissensions is addressed as follows, "Narada, fond of feuds!" A smart reply is illustrated by the following question and reply: "Appaji! No salt." When a king and his minister were out for a walk, the former smelt a curry and said, "Appaji?" "No salt" was the prompt reply. The minister proved to be a correct thought-reader. "Valmiki for the forest, and Vyasa for war," is an allusion to the respective authors of the Ramayana and Mahabharata. There is a similar allusion in "Vijaya for the bow and Nakula for the horse." "Living like Cupid and Venus" is symbolic of conjugal bliss. The following is a very modern saying but it hits off official delays: "When it is reported that the Mylapore tank has burst its embankment, the reply is that we shall consider it at the next meeting of Committee." "Will Varuna rain only on one section of the people?" is an allusion to the impartiality of the God of rain. "Rejecting with a kick the Goddess of Fortune who has come of her own accord" is more forcible than "Looking a gift horse in the mouth."

A careful study of Tamil proverbial lore will also afford some proof of philosophical research on the part of these simple people. The mind and its operations seem to have been

## TAMIL PROVERBS.

analysed and described by appropriate names. They have their own terms for the mind, will, judgment, memory, imagination, understanding, motive, feeling and emotion, not one of which is to be traced to Aryan cult. The *mind* itself was named in two ways, *viz.*, *ullam* and *nenju*, meaning literally the *inner* and the *larynx*. The former is used for a more passive, and the latter for a more active state of the soul. The difference between the ego and non-ego has been clearly perceived and stated with emphasis. The line of demarcation is preserved even in every-day life. It is not 'I am sick,' but "my body is ill." The 'body' is something I have 'assumed,' or, to be more consistent with its literal import, what I have 'clad' myself in. The body is also a 'nest' from which the spirit-bird takes its flight. "The world exists as long as self exists," is, in other words, "no self—no world." The world is the creation of the self. This is rather idealistic; at any rate, self-consciousness is emphasized. Unlike later theories resulting from conversion to Brahmanism and the philosophy of the Upanishads, the Tamil understood himself to be a conscious ego, quite distinct from the non-ego on the one hand, and the 'Father' on the other. For the 'soul,' they have a word 'avi' which corresponds exactly to the Latin 'spirit.' It is used for both life and the self-conscious soul. What but very careful research could have discovered the fact that "There is only a finger's-breadth distance between truth and falsehood?"

As to religious philosophy, the Tamils had no idea whatever. Their mind is not naturally speculative. Even in modern times they have simply devoured Aryan teaching and repeated it like parrots. No Tamil man has as yet founded a religious system of his own, or undertaken to reform the religious views of his countrymen. The proverbs contain scores of ethical rules; but these have no connection with religion or philosophy. On the contrary they are authoritative precepts, mostly instinctive; though some are also the results of experience.

Tamil philology derives no little help from proverbs. Where

they reflect the language and sentiments of the people in their pre-Aryan days, the study of this science will be found specially interesting. The richness of the language is best seen in this connection. Words which are becoming rare or obsolete, simply because they have been superseded by Sanskrit substitutes, find their legitimate place and use in these old sayings, affording, as it were, a special plea for their restoration. There are, for instance, three distinct Tamil words for *king*, all of which are now either obsolete or relegated to poetry. *Ko* is preserved in *kovil*, a temple, and seems to be a distant relation of the European *king*. The other two, *viz.*, *Ventu* and *mannan* are no longer in ordinary use, their place being usurped by the Sanscrit *raja*, both in its tatsama and tadbhava forms. The existence, however, of three names for one and the same object bespeaks the thoughtful character of the Tamils, and the progressive tendency of their tongue. It also shews the early civilization of the people and the different kinds of rulers under whom they lived. The original word for 'water,' *nir*, has gone quite out of daily use, while a compound has taken its place. This compound means 'cold water,' so that, when a Tamil speaks of 'water,' he actually uses the word for 'cold water,' though in his mind there is not the least reference to temperature. The people's partiality for a cool drink in a hot climate accounts for the compound term gradually superseding the original.

It may be surprising to many to learn that the Tamil people have no name for a lamp. The word used in the proverbs and still in current use is a verb used as a noun and means to declare, brighten, polish. And thus when they got an article which removed darkness and made things visible and bright they called it *vilakku*, the 'declarer.' As a simple people living mostly in the fields and doing all their work by day, the idea of a lamp for the night—beyond the oven which burns in a corner of the cottage—would not naturally occur

to them. That it was an importation appears not only from the name they have coined, but also from the following amusing story :—Certain people from a rural district went on a visit to their relations who happened to live in a 'town' and noticing a lamp (an orthodox lamp is a tiny mud vessel for the oil and wick) burning in a niche, and being greatly delighted and surprised at the new article, one of them asked the host what it was. The reply was that it was a young one of the Sun. The rustic of course coveted the bright little "young one," and determined to carry it off to his village. But to make it sure, when the people went to sleep, he took it and hid it away in the thatched roof, and the next moment the whole cottage was in flames. Lamp-lighting has thus acquired so much importance that in proverbial language to "light a lamp in one's house" is to settle one in life. The term for husband is the "purchaser," and clearly alludes to the ancient custom—still in vogue—of paying a price for a wife. For 'house' there are four words, all Tamil, *viz.*, *il*, *akam*, *manai* and *vidu*, of which the last seems the most modern, while the first has passed into Telugu currency.

The sayings of the Tamil people on Hygiene and other kindred subjects are worthy of note as shewing the advance they made in medical lore, and the accuracy or otherwise of their observation in this connection. With them "medicine is to be taken three times." "Take medicine at sun-set." "Bael fruit is the antidote for (excessive) bile." Castor-oil is a favourite remedy for children. "Poison is the best antidote to poison." "If eaten to excess, even nectar is poison." "They attach great importance to margosa (neem) oil. The bark of the vël tree cures scrofulous complaints. Faith is necessary for the efficacy of medicine. Two persons to be feared are the doctor and the ruffian. Whatever the doctor prescribes is medicine. A doctor cannot cure himself. They had seen so much evil from taking medicine that they exclaimed, "Is it medicine, or madness?" "They believe only a fourth of the



doctor's words." After all "Home remedies are better than the doctor's." The whole village is friendly to the doctor. Their name for sickness is simply pain—*noy*. Common people need no medicine, for "Street dust is medicine for a donkey's ulcer." "When the dhoby is ill, he must go to his stone."

Turning to hygiene it is satisfactory to know that they believe in slow eating; for "If you eat little by little, you can eat up even a mountain." To women they allow less food than men. Still, "Moderate food is the joy of the soul." Disappointment makes a person swell. A nursing mother has a very good appetite. Eat nutritious food. Those who eat well, look well. Even the pious feel drowsy after meals. "Refreshments are very agreeable." "There is a forty days' chance for a good life." "If a patient has appetite, he will not die." "A barren woman will become fruitful, if she drinks rice and water and stays at home." "Food without ghee is useless." "The way to eat is to melt the ghee, increase the butter-milk and decrease the water." "Hunger knows no taste, nor sleep comfort." "He who has drunk milk belches with milk, and he who has drunk toddy belches with toddy," contains a double truth, both hygienic and moral. They believe in burning an ulcer, for "an ulcer that has been burnt will do no harm." Likewise "an ulcer heals by free lancing." "One-self is the remedy for one's illness" proves the practical wisdom of the people, by urging self-reliance even in cases of distress. "Sugar-cane tasting bitter is the fault of the mouth," cuts both ways, figuratively as well as literally.

Translators, and especially those of a high order who seek to interpret not merely the words but the thoughts of one nation into the language of another, and *vice versa*, will find an almost inexhaustible mine of help in this literature. A daily study of it will enable the translator to grasp the inner workings of the Tamil mind and the words and phrases by which it naturally gives expression to them. As "The face is the mirror of the heart," so proverbs may be said to be the mirror

of the national mind. The exact meaning and usage of words is to be obtained not so much in books as in the proverbial language of the people. It must not be forgotten that Tamil is as poor in prose as it is rich in poetry. Modern prose style has not much to commend it.

It does not reflect the language of the people. It is more or less artificial and laden with Sanskrit and religious technicalities. The style of proverbs, on the contrary, is instinctive. It leaps forth with a force and freedom only equalled by its terseness and elegance. It appeals to the heart or the national conscience, its power is marvellous. In the midst of confusion, or an excited controversy, a suitable proverb or two acts like oil on troubled waters. The literature, besides, abounds in phrases and turns of expression, similes and metaphors, even happy hyperboles and 'dire darts' of sarcasm, which must be of the greatest value to one in search of terms fitted to express a particular shade of thought, awaken a desired emotion, or convey a foreign figure into language at once intelligible and attractive. In a lexicon, a word stands alone; in a proverb it has its natural setting as in a mosaic. It is therefore no less the duty of the translator than the scholar to make himself familiar with, or, master, if possible, of this thesaurus of Tamil words and phrases. For a long time to come, and until a truly, idiomatic native style is created by the appearance of model prose writers keeping march with the advance of thought and knowledge, the style of this indigenous literature will hold the field as being the best fitted to move the popular mind and mould its ideas. "The voice of the people is the voice of God" is itself a Tamil proverb.

Let me quote but a few examples. *Tunilum iruppan turumpilum iruppan*, (God) is in both the pillar and the straw. The words used for 'pillar' and 'straw' are a popular phrase expressing completeness, from the biggest to the smallest article in a house. "He makes a pillar of straw"

indicates an exaggerating tendency. 'Distant green is delightful to the eye' is a happy equivalent of the English poet's line, "'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view." 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump' is elegantly rendered by "*kalap pālukkut tūlir pirai*," a drop of leaven for a *kalam* of milk. Backing out of an engagement is well expressed by "drawing back the foot which has been placed in the front." Compare a "horse's horn" with a 'mare's nest.'

The Tamil people seem to have been very careful observers of the ways and habits of animals from the elephant down to the ant. The proverbs relating to them embody many a useful lesson. The elephant, which is a native of South India, has evidently made a deep impression on the Tamil mind. Its enormous size and prodigious strength, its great capacity for work of all kinds, the smallness and keenness of its eyes, the commercial value of its body, its polydexterous trunk, its many excellent qualities, not to speak of its tamableness and obedience, have contributed rather more than a hundred proverbs to colloquial literature. The following 'hints' will give an idea of the truths and lessons drawn from this huge creature. "Seeking one's own ruin." "Essentials different from accidentals." "Missing things not to be sought in unlikely places." "Even the great may slip." "The great fear no obstacles." 'A time for everything.' 'Gain in proportion to capital.' 'Great gulfs not easily bridged.' 'Losing big things to save small.' 'Caught between two great foes.' 'Even trifles may become great obstacles.' 'Right means *versus* wrong ones.' "Like men blind from birth striking one another after *seeing* an elephant" refers to a story as well known as it is instructive that I am tempted to relate it here. Four men blind from birth desired to *see* an elephant. Being led to its side each began to feel about the animal at the portion nearest to him. One touched its legs, another its tail, a third its ears and the last its trunk, each forming his own ideas of the

elephant. Returning home they began to describe the creature among themselves. One said it was like a pillar ; another contradicted him saying it was more like a broom ; the next contradicted both, and asserted that was neither a pillar not a broom, but a sieve ; while the last boasted that all three were wrong, for it was like a pestle or rice pounder. The saying is usually applied to misconceptions arising from partial views of an object, or subject, especially those about the nature and attributes of the Divine Being. " Like the wood-apple devoured by the elephant " is another often-quoted but little understood saying. The Tamil notion is that when the elephant devours a wood-apple (vilankani), the shell is passed out unbroken, while the contents are digested in a mysterious manner. How far this is true I have been unable to ascertain ; but it seems most unlikely. The keeper of the elephant in the People's Park cannot verify the notion. The application of the proverb, however, is the mysterious disappearance of something.

The ant is the smallest living thing known to the naked eye of the Tamils. Of animalcula or bacilli they know nothing. They speak of " 8,000 crores of creatures beginning with the ants." While Solomon was impressed with the wisdom of this little creature, the Tamil sage has discovered that " even a stone wears away by the constant creeping of an ant," and applies it to plodding perseverance or continued influence. " Ant bites " represent trifling injuries.

Space does not permit me to dwell on sayings regarding other animals. Tamil opinion of the ass is quite unfavourable. The patience of the beast, so much extolled in English books, seems to have escaped their notice. To them it is invariably an emblem of stupidity, baseness, and even uselessness. In the Tamil country it is used only by washermen. But its milk is highly prized. It sells about 150 per cent. dearer than cow's milk. Horses, dogs, oxen, cows, goats, monkeys, cats, rats, bats, snakes, tigers, bears, croco-

diles, have also contributed, each in its way, to the literature of proverbs.

Among birds, the crow is the best known. It is said "to live on the remnants of human food and yet exist for a thousand years." They are not aware of a white crow. "To the crow, its young one is a golden bird," is a well-known saying. They have a similar saying about the monkey. In their opinion, the former is noted for its blackness, and the latter for its ugliness. "A single stone for a thousand crows," is a forcible remark. The crow nurses the young ones of the cuckoo, which lays its eggs in its nest. The domestic fowl has also contributed a number of proverbs. Some are really beautiful. "Will the treading of the hen make the chicken lame?" "Because the hen is black, will its eggs be black also?" "Not only is the fowl lost, but also the voice (throat)." "Is it the crowing of the cock or the barking of the dog, that hails day-break?" The great pest of the Indian sleeper, the mosquito, and his stealthy companions, fleas and bugs, have received their due share of attention. "Are we to remove for fear of mosquitoes?" contains an excellent moral. "Straining the mosquito and swallowing the camel" is very much like the Scriptural proverb :

Trees play a very prominent part in a tropical region like South India. Many a useful and instructive saying has its origin in Indian trees. The banyan with its suspended roots and umbrageous branches, the peepul so similar to and yet different from the banyan, the favourite fig and the sacred margosa with its bitter fruit and medicinal leaves, the far famed nux vomica, the graceful areca palm and the graceless palmyra, with the imported cocoa, the endless variety of fruit and food trees yielding their produce in regular succession from one end of the year to the other, the world-wide known lotus and jessamine, not to speak of countless shrubs and smaller plants, have enriched the proverbial literature of the land in no small measure. No one can understand the eastern saying. "The

righteous shall flourish like the palm," who has not seen and studied the palmyra in its native soil. Bare and graceless as it looks, it is the most useful tree in the world. There is not a bit of it that is ever wasted. A whole cottage can be built with the materials yielded by the palmyra alone. I might write pages describing the uses of this valuable tropical palm. Civilization is its one great foe, and to it it will one day succumb. The cocoa palm which "yields at the head what it receives at its foot," is literally the "southern" tree, and is always an emblem of gratitude. A very rare occurrence is "as if the fig tree blossomed;" this tree is peculiar in bearing without blossoms. The miser is compared to the *nux vomica*. "Can the *nux vomica* become sweet, if watered with milk?" reminds one of the Biblical saying "Can the leopard change his spots?" The margosa also bears a bitter fruit, but its bitterness is nothing compared with that of the *nux vomica*. Its bitterness becomes reconciled by habit, and so some apparently disagreeable persons. For "the more the margosa is liked, the more does it taste like sugar-cane." "Even margosa oil will be useful in a time of need." "Will money paid for margosa oil taste bitter?"

The English "betel" is merely a corruption of the Tamil *vettrilai*, 'the empty leaf.' The betel is not a native creeper, but an importation from Penang. It is a universal luxury after meals, when it is chewed with areca nuts and a little lime. It gives the tongue and lips a crimson hue, and is said to be an aid to digestion. The betel requires very tender cultivation. And so they say "like water to the betel and saffron to the prostitute." In the saying, "Leaves protect the tree and money one's honour," they seem to be aware of the botanical fact that leaves are lungs to a tree. The Tamils have different names for the different stages through which their staple food has to pass. In the field it is *nel* (paddy), when the husk is removed, it is *arisi* (rice), and when it is cooked, it is *sôru*. "What flows to the paddy flows also to

the grass " may be compared to "dogs eating the crumbs which fall from the table." The Tamils ask, "who ever hated rice and one's husband?" Selfishness is well exposed by the following, "the elder sister's property is rice, but her younger sister's is bran."

A few remarks on the purely human aspect of these proverbs will, it is hoped, be a fitting conclusion to this brief introduction. Laying aside all such sayings as are merely local and national, or embodying some popular prejudice or custom, let us consider those which are of a more or less universal nature, dealing with God, man, and morality. The ancient Tamil people seem to have been a highly moral race. They had a genuine admiration for truth and justice, honesty and humility, love and mercy, and abhorred every form of vice and hypocrisy. To a great extent their sayings must have been the results of their experience, as they are in the case of the proverbs of other nations; but there is also evidence to show that they explored the inner realm of motives, and sought a safer and higher authority for their utterances than the shifting sands of utility. The moral instinct seems never to have been dormant in the Tamil mind. To it is the final appeal, rather than the outward and tangible result of a moral or merciful act. Many of these sayings can bear comparison with those of the greatest sages the world has ever produced; some are worthy of the Divine Teacher Himself.

Philology has done a good work by proving the affinity of the Indo-European nations. But its work is not complete. Another and a greater Philologist than Max Müller has yet to appear who can by a still wider and deeper research prove that the Dravidian and the Mongol, the Hottentot and the South Sea Islander, and the ancestors of nations called Indo-European, once spoke the same language and uttered the same sounds for the same ideas. Proverbs, however, go still further. They have already performed what Philology has yet to accomplish. Philology deals with words,

while Proverbs deal with thoughts. They enable us to compare mind with mind, and thought with thought, irrespective of the dress in which the thoughts may be clothed. And as a striking fact we find that the Dravidian and the Aryan have thought and felt alike on moral as well as mundane matters. They look up to the same "Father," appeal to the same "Monitor," assert the same virtues and condemn the same vices, notwithstanding the fact that the former is the more primitive branch of the human race. They have thus shared alike in the "True light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Proverbs therefore have a mission of their own. Reflecting the relics of the Divine image which was originally stamped on the progenitors of the race, they bring its scattered branches into closer relationship as members of one and the same family, binding heart to heart, and soul to soul, and make them exclaim in one united voice, "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth. . . that they should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us." Beneath these marks of marvellous affinity, all distinctions of race and colour, and creed and clime vanish away. Even the boasted grandeur of advancing science leaps aside, and lays bare the human soul, in whatever part of the globe it may be, ever throbbing with the same moral emotions, struggling against the same foes, confessing a common weakness, crying for a common remedy, and also, let us hope, for a common Guru "who can change the character."

#### 4.—UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AND POPULAR EDUCATION.\*

The importance of the subject I have chosen and the difficulties connected with the solution of a problem like that of

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popular education are such that it is only with very great diffidence I venture to offer a few notes for your consideration. Properly speaking, it is the University itself or some expert in education that must be expected to devise a scheme whereby the benefits of the University—the fruit of the tree of knowledge which grows within its pale—might be brought within the reach of the masses. Still when I pass from village to village in the near neighbourhood of Madras and find that the stream—not certainly of learning and science properly so called, but of knowledge useful for practical purposes which takes its source at the University—has not, even after the lapse of forty years, begun to flow among the villages, and affect, even in the least degree, the thoughts and ways of the masses, I cannot help feeling that the time has come for the authorities to consider the question of University Extension for this country. It is therefore as an outsider interested in the welfare of the people at large, that I desire to view the question from a practical standpoint, and offer a few suggestions on the relation of the University to popular education, or the instruction of the masses. •

It is now about seventy years since the genius of Sir Thomas Munro gave the first start to English education in this Presidency. Previous to this date, there seems to have flourished an indigenous education of a more or less religious nature. There were then about 12,000 native schools or *patashalas*, with about 190,000 pupils, of whom 4,540 were females. Reckoning the population at 13 millions in 1826, there were about 15 per cent. of the people who could read and write. This speaks well for the Hindus as regards a general desire for religious education. The present percentage is only five. It ought to be the other way. There has therefore been a marked decrease in the number of vernacular literates. The education which was formerly sought and paid for on purely religious grounds is little cared for in this utilitarian age. Religious education, though in the vernaculars, does not pay. And the old pial

schoolmaster, once the terror of rural lads, is becoming quite a *rara avis* among the villages. The two millions who can now read and write their vernacular out of a total population of 35 millions are almost wholly those who have received a modern *primary* education. In other words, out of every 100 of the population in this Presidency, as many as 95 can neither read nor write. This is a state of affairs most discreditable to an ancient land like India. I do not think there is any country in Europe or America that shows so poor a return. The 15 per cent. of 1826 ought to have gone up to 50 per cent., and not dwindled down to 5 as at present. In estimating the spread of education among the masses, the 81,000 English literates in 1891 (when the last census was taken), or the about 85,000 who can read and write English at the present time, must be left entirely out of consideration. They merely represent the apex of a lofty cone at whose base lies a nation of 35 millions, with an impassable slope between the two.

But coming back to the 5 per cent. who can read and write their vernacular, it must be asked, what is the total amount of knowledge, worth the name, indicated by the term literates? Very little indeed; so little that it hardly succeeds in creating a desire for more. The foundation is too slender for a superstructure. But even granting that 5 out of every 100 Hindus do derive a little knowledge from their school-readers in the days of their childhood, it must be admitted that they lose most of it as they advance towards adult life, and become no better informed than the 95 illiterates who surround them. Thus the whole nation is in a state of absolute ignorance. By ignorance is not meant a state of barbarism ordering on the brutal, but an ignorance of the most important facts and laws which are most essential to the well-being and improvement of the masses, an ignorance resulting in a dull monotony of life and thought extending over thousands of years, without change and without improvement, unless some trifling benefits are occasionally thrust on them from without. This is the case with the 55,000-

villages in this Presidency. In the course of my rural work I have become acquainted, more or less familiarly, with the inner life and circumstances of some 250 villages, in a neighbouring taluq and my description of the ignorance that prevails and the mistakes and errors it produces, will, I believe, be found true, in a large measure, of every village in South India. Whole pages might be written in proof of this universal ignorance. But a few salient features will suffice for our present purpose.

The ignorance I refer to is to be seen in every department of life and thought. It haunts the villager from birth to death. To begin with, he is a perfect stranger to the fundamental laws of health. He knows nothing as to the real nature of the food he consumes. To him all food is alike nourishing, while quantity is invariably preferred to quality. Exercise, for its own sake, he detests. He builds his house without windows, as if fresh air and light were his mortal foes. To the Tamil poet, "sanitation is a botheration." The mere sight of the vaccinator is enough to scare away the mother and her terrified children. In the villager's private opinion, no patient ever returns alive from an English hospital. As regards the training and bringing up of his children, he has no right notions whatever. He acts from impulse, not principle. Punishment is cruel and revengeful, not reformatory or love-inspiring. A child of five acquires the knowledge of adult life, while obscenity of speech gives spice to its talk. Though simple in his habits and thrifty by nature, the villager has not learned the secret of successful investment. Surplus money is converted into jewels. It is estimated that 3 crores of rupees are thus locked up in this country. A marriage and a death often consume the villager's savings of years and even launch him in debt. He boasts as much of his debts as of his property.

Of the outside world, the villager remains in blissful ignorance. Why should the frog in the well trouble itself about the country's affairs, is a favourite Tamil saying. It is a matter of perfect indifference to him, whether 5,000 people have perished

by the submergence of an island, a whole city is being devastated by an epidemic or a member of the Legislative Council is imprisoned for sedition. Crops, rain and taxes make up his entire world, and in this he lives and moves from year to year. His thoughts seldom go beyond these favourite topics. Others he neither cares to question nor thinks worthy of his consideration. On the other hand, he has his own notions regarding the government. He does not care who it is that rules. It is all the same to him whether the ruling power be Hindu or Mussalman, English or Russian. "It is all right whether Rama rules or Ravana," I once asked an old villager whether he would like to be ruled by the Russians. "What does it matter to me, Sir," he replied, "we must pay our taxes all the same." For to the ordinary villager, taxes are the only tangible signs of the existing government. His mental horizon is not wide enough to make him see the benefits conferred on him, such as security of life and property, improved irrigation and sanitation. He is therefore neither loyal nor disloyal, and is utterly at a loss to compare government with government. And, as a matter of fact, he does not know why taxes are levied at all. In the absence of explanations to the contrary, he fancies that taxes are demanded for the support of the people who keep writing in the cutcherries, and sometimes go about on horseback, while he is sweating from head to foot at the plough in his distant fields. Government red-tapeism is, to him, a perfect enigma. I have often heard people remark, "In the olden days when a tank burst, we called for a *panchayet*, estimated the cost and put it right in a week; but with this Government, it takes a year to repair a breach; meanwhile, we lose a whole crop." He is fleeced on all sides. He can't get through a single transaction, such as the sale, purchase or mortgage of a piece of land, without being obliged to pay something in coin or kind to one or more officials concerned. In his ignorance and perplexity, he asks, why all this persecution? Can't we do our business without all these encumbrances? Why should we walk

20 miles to have a sale registered? "These little things are great to little man." And as the Indian villager, with his already narrowed mind, broods on these and other kindred ills to which his flesh is heir, he gradually glides into a gloomy state of life, with nothing to relieve his monotony or cheer him on his toilsome journey, while his general ignorance prevents him from seeking means of mitigating the evil. Those who know anything of Indian village life, and view it from an enlightened standpoint, will, I think, admit that the picture is by no means overdrawn.

Now with the ignorance of the masses, so appalling and universal, staring at us at every turn throughout the length and breadth of 'South India' and for that matter, throughout the whole Indian continent, such questions as the following naturally suggest themselves to every intelligent and earnest man. How is this ignorance to be dispelled? How is the Indian villager to be provided with knowledge that will give him occupation for his leisure hours, open up to his vision higher and nobler views of life and duty, and enable him to train his children in the way they should walk, to appreciate the laws of health and domestic economy, to obtain correct and satisfactory notions of the machinery of government, to gain an insight into the workings of natural phenomena at least in his neighbourhood, to take an intelligent interest in the events of the world and to perform the hundred other things which are the legitimate concern of an intelligent human soul? Is he to remain in perpetual ignorance and be allowed to lead a life little better than that of "dumb driven cattle"? If not, who is to blame in the matter, and whose is the responsibility of remedying the evil? I am sure no one will come forward to say that the condition of the masses is all that it ought to be and that no amelioration is needed on the lines indicated above. On the other hand I believe it is high time that those in whose hands lies the power as well as the means to place useful knowledge within reach

## POPULAR EDUCATION.

of the 85 millions of this Presidency, took active measures for this purpose. Once the evil is recognised, the duty to remedy it becomes imperative.

That Primary schools with their ill-informed and starving teachers scattered but sparingly over the land, could ever supply this knowledge to the masses, is a hopeless delusion. During the last seventy years they have enabled but 5 per cent. of the population to read and write their vernaculars. The knowledge communicated is infinitesimal, and when we remember that it is children who are the pupils in these schools, the ignorance of the adult population remains as solid as ever. Primary schools, therefore, are not the source whence the stream of knowledge is to flow to our teeming millions. But it may be asserted that these agencies place in the hands of the future adult the key wherewith he may unlock the treasures of knowledge and eventually make them his own. To this I reply, that the disinclination of the literate villager for study and the poverty of vernacular literature in the matter of the supply of knowledge, soon make the key rusty and useless, while in spite of schools, the traditional ignorance continues to enshroud the whole land from generation to generation, and the percentage of vernacular literates remains deplorably the same. Still it must be confessed that such a state of things in any country, and more particularly in this ancient land of learning and literary effort, is most unsatisfactory. It should not be allowed to continue a year longer if it can be helped. The masses must be taught and elevated and brought into more intimate contact with the educated few, and, through them, with their rulers at the helm of the state. There must be a free and continuous circulation of life and thought between the educated classes and the ignorant masses. In a word, the gulf that now exists and widens year by year must be bridged.

To me it appears after some careful thought that the party most fitted to dispel this ignorance of centuries and effect a

most salutary reform among the masses, is the Madras University. It may be asked, and with reason too, what has an august examining body in the metropolis to do with the masses of the land? According to the Act of Incorporation, the University for this Presidency has been established "for the purpose of ascertaining, by means of examination, the persons who have acquired proficiency in different branches of Literature, Science and Art, and of rewarding them by academical degrees as evidence of their respective attainments, and marks of honour proportioned thereto." It may therefore be urged that the University as such has nothing whatever to do with the masses of the people. Though it promotes education by means of its examinations, the education is such that the masses can have neither lot nor part in it. It is quite beyond their reach. This I fully admit. But when we come to the questions put to the candidates for degrees and the answers expected of them, we shall see that the well-being and education of the masses is one of the distinctly implied purposes of the University. Every candidate solemnly promises that "to the utmost of his opportunity and ability he will support and promote the cause of morality and sound learning, and that he will as far as in him lies, uphold and advance social order and the well-being of his fellowmen." The promotion, therefore, of such lofty objects as morality and learning, social order and well-being of men, is by the University solemnly entrusted to the graduates on whom it stamps its imprimatur year after year. In other words, the *alma mater* is expected to discharge this most important function through her *alumni*. She equips and fortifies her graduates and extracts from them the promise that what they receive with the one hand they will scatter with the other. They are to be the light of the people's world, the very salt which is to give them their savour, and preserve them from further putrefaction. Herein lies the possibility of University Extension for India. The graduates are the channel through which the

stream of knowledge is to flow from the University to the masses. The University by demanding the promise and the graduates by deliberately acquiescing in it, have committed themselves to the advancement of the people's well-being in every possible way. A University which does not at least aim at this most desirable object falls far short of its ideal. The promise, indeed, is annually demanded and made. But there it lies, like the dry bones of Ezekiel's vision, dead and inert, waiting to be breathed upon, into life and activity.

But the great difficulty is the *modus operandi*. How are the graduates to communicate in some organised and systematic manner the practical knowledge they have acquired through the University by years of arduous labour, study and research? Not by establishing schools! These cannot reach the adult population, who, in the first instance, would accept useful knowledge only through a speedy and less laborious method than a child's three R's. Not by vernacular books; for 95 per cent. of the masses cannot read, and of the 5 who can, few have the taste for general reading and fewer still the means to cultivate any that they may have. I believe the only successful and efficient means by which the masses may be informed and instructed is a system of Popular Vernacular Lectures throughout the country. We hear frequently, and perhaps too frequently, of lectures and papers in the English language, and these, even in small and obscure mofussil towns, but seldom of any in the Vernaculars, unless it be for some political agitation. Lectures in the language of the people are the schools in which they may be effectually taught an infinite variety of knowledge. By attending such schools the villager will soon come to see that there are "more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in his philosophy," by a knowledge of which he could rise in the scale of life, and better himself and his surroundings.

There is nothing novel or original in this proposal. It is mainly an endeavour to reproduce in India, on lines suited to the present condition and capacity of the masses, the Univer-



sity Extension movement of England and the Continent. Although this movement met with some opposition at the commencement (as all movements do), it has since achieved a marvellous success. In some countries it has developed so fast as to become a distinct feature of their national life. In many continental towns as well as in London, adult working men gather together by the hundred and pay to hear lectures on subjects in which they are specially interested. Why should it not be tried, at least as an experiment, in this country where it is so badly needed by the masses? There can be no end to the number or variety of such talks to the people in the open air. Graduates may choose the subjects in which they are—not certainly experts—but fairly well posted. Taxes, the revenue system, irrigation, astronomy, geography, inventions, sanitation, food, agriculture, rain, alcohol, the various useful arts, the training of children, biographies of great and good men, engineering, ethnology, history, census returns, physiology, chemistry, botany, philology and even politics may be lectured upon. By popular lectures, I do not mean abstruse papers, prepared in a pedantic language and read in a sing-song manner to a drowsy audience—but familiar talks in a colloquial style, spiced with a little humour and anecdote and apt illustration, that would keep even a dull rustic from going to sleep, and at the same time awaken his slumbering intelligence and fill his mind with stores of knowledge useful for his every-day life.

The lectures I plead for are at the present time, if not for all time, the only antidote to the universal ignorance of the people, while the benefits to be derived from them will be all-important and far-reaching. They will first of all create a new taste for knowledge. Like a new savoury dish, every item of fresh information begets a desire for more. When the villagers are told, for instance, about the reasons for the imposition of taxes, by a graduate who happens to be a Revenue official, they will naturally like to know how the revenue is utilised, for what purposes and in what proportion. The lectures will

stimulate thought. The villager who thinks of nothing else but his crops and cattle and the delay of rain, will be led to direct his attention to other profitable subjects. A single statement of the lecturer may start in the hearer's mind a train of thought, the results of which no one may now be able to estimate. Thinkers will rise from among the common people, who may cause even the educated to blush. The masses will be lifted from the depths of their ignorance, error and degradation. They will enter an altogether new world. They will be made to understand the errors of many of their customs and ways of life. When they are, *e. g.*, convinced and warned that to sleep immediately after a heavy meal, to eat till they belch, or as late as eleven in the night, to expose their persons to night air, to keep a cow-shed near their bed—all tend to shorten and embitter their life, (and this remark is further confirmed by a comparison of the average duration of English and Indian life,) it cannot but produce a most powerful impression on the hitherto vacant mind. What public and private education has not succeeded in accomplishing among the masses during the last seventy years, will be achieved by popular lectures under organised management in a single decade, if it takes so long a time at all. Lectures are stimulating, contagious and productive of immediate effect. Political agitators are well aware of this secret, and with them, therefore, the Platform, even more than the Press, is the favourite weapon by which they carry out their purposes.

Besides these, there will arise a fresh stimulus for education itself. When interest has been roused in a village by a popular lecturer, the people will of themselves try to open night schools where they may learn to read and eventually be able to drink at the fountain-head of knowledge. Not being school-pupils, but voluntary scholars, they will learn to value knowledge for its own sake, and seek a new delight in its acquisition and use.

As the lecturers will naturally endeavour to place ideals

before the masses, a spirit of healthy discontent with the present state of things will be fostered, and efforts will be put forth to realize the ideals which are constantly placed before them. The people will thus be led to seek the very best things in every department of life and unconsciously embark on a career of endless progress. If lectures could be organised for women also to listen to women-speakers, and the women of India once catch the contagion of lecture-hearing, two parallel forces, mighty and irresistible in their march, would be created both propelling the great mass of the people on the same progressive lines and for the same glorious ends. There will also be a healthy reaction on the lecturers themselves, from among whom there will arise from time to time great and powerful orators, and all will be forced to study and think about the subjects which they have selected for the instruction of the people, and this in its turn will produce a vigorous intellectual life among the educated classes. The lectures will also secure permanency in the shape of pamphlets on popular subjects, popularly treated. On the whole, however, as Lord Playfair says, "the main purpose of these lectures is not to educate the masses, but to permeate them with the desire for intellectual improvement, and show them methods by which they can attain this desire. Every man who acquires a taste for learning and is imbued with the desire to acquire more of it, becomes more valuable as a citizen, because he is more intelligent and perceptive. The most intelligent nation will in future be the greatest nation and our work is to do our part in permeating the people with this general intelligence, which is so necessary for their prosperity in the competition of the world." These lectures will gradually transform the scattered and divided peoples of India into a single united nation, with a common life, a common interest, and a common end.

But the lectures must be organised. Individual effort, however commendable, can never hope to discharge so stupendous a task. There would be neither uniformity nor durability.

Although the bulk of the work will ultimately, and very properly devolve on the graduates themselves, some responsible body like the University or the Government through its Director of Public Instruction must take the initiative. For the movement must be carefully planned in all its details, and wisely watched and guided. The directing body must be at the Presidency town, effectually controlling the movement so as to give it from the very commencement a steady and uniform development. There are about 4,800 graduates, with as many promises made but not yet fulfilled, who are scattered throughout the Presidency and are employed in various capacities, waiting for opportunities to serve and to be led. With a little encouragement in the shape of annual grants in arrears for courses of lectures delivered during the year, many of them would willingly come forward to undertake so pleasant a task in the village or town where they might happen to be employed. The Government by ordering a small sum to be assigned annually, as a Popular Lectures Fund from Provincial or Local Funds, or both, could easily find the means of meeting this extra charge for so laudable an object as the education of the masses; while the controlling body could draw up a syllabus for the information and guidance of the lecturers.

To begin with, an experiment might be made in every Taluk town only (and there are about 150 such towns in the Presidency), in which the inspecting educational officer might be requested to invite lecturers for the next official year. The promise of grants would prove a sufficient inducement in this utilitarian age, not to speak of the value of returns and statistics as an indication of the popular pulse in regard to this tentative scheme. If then the movement succeeds in Taluk towns, the system might be gradually extended to the Unions, both major and minor, of which, I believe, there are upwards of five hundred in our Presidency. Should the movement take on with the people, as I have reason to believe it will, and they begin to look upon it as a pleasant and instructive

feature of village life, small fees might be charged for admission, or what would be more successful, a collection might be taken at the end of the lecture! But these and others like these are details that had better be left in the hands of the controlling committee. I have merely hinted at the feasibility of the movement. I should like to suggest in this connection that the interesting little pamphlets issued in such welcome profusion by the indefatigable Secretary of the C. I. Society might form an excellent basis for the proposed popular lectures.

I must now bring these remarks to a close. I have endeavoured to show that with the exception of a very minute fraction of the population, namely,  $\frac{1}{7300}$  the whole Presidency lies in the depth and darkness of ignorance; that Primary schools have done and can do little for the removal of this ignorance; that the University alone, by means of its graduates, could educate the masses of the people; that this is implied in its constitution and bye-laws; that popular vernacular lectures are the only means by which the graduates could convey to the masses, speedily and effectually, the valuable knowledge they have acquired through their *alma mater*; and that the help and encouragement of the Government is necessary to organise a movement by which the masses could be gradually lifted from their ignorance and degradation.

I trust that His Excellency the Governor in Council will be pleased to consider this humble proposal and mark his already wise and popular administration by the inauguration of a scheme of instruction for the 35 millions of people committed to his care. The education of the masses, so often referred to and emphasized in the educational despatches, notably that of 1854, and yet so little realized by the existing methods, must be taken in hand with enthusiasm. Popular lectures, such as I plead for, must be recognised as an essential feature of the educational policy of Government. For, in the words of Lord

Macaulay in his famous minute of 1835, "it is impossible for us (that is, the British Government), with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste and opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population." Sixty-two years have passed away since these pregnant words were uttered, and yet the masses have not budged an inch on the path of knowledge and progress. If, indeed, knowledge is power, and the possession of it promotes the wealth and happiness of a nation, then the gift of it, I submit, is the greatest and most precious boon that a benign Government can bestow on an illiterate and subjugated race.

### 5.—MADRAS UNIVERSITY REFORM.

The subject of reform in the Madras University is at present the one absorbing topic of the educated world in South India. Articles and letters are appearing almost daily in the local dailies and periodicals, embodying the varying views of veterans and educationists interested in the progress of the University. We are all deeply indebted to the Honourable Dr. Bourne who has with remarkable courage and vigour taken advantage of the new epoch in the history of our *Alma Mater* and laid a scheme of reform before the Senate and through it before the educated public. Dr. Bourne's proposal to abolish the Matriculation Examination in favour of a "pre-collegiate Examination" a year later, which in its turn should do away with the present F. A. Examination, and lead in three years to a pass B. A. Degree, and in five years to an Honours

B. A. Degree, making the M. A. an Honorary degree, has seemed so radical on the face of it that it is no wonder that it has raised a storm in the educational world and given rise to a lengthy and most interesting discussion. Like the fiscal policy of Mr. Chamberlain, it has divided the thinking portion of the country into two distinct parties. It is urged, and with reason too, that unless the complete details of the whole scheme are divulged, the discussion is mainly in the dark. Still discussion of problems connected with higher education cannot be in vain. It educates and forms a healthy public opinion and ultimately lays down the right principles on which alone a sound national education can be based and developed. My only qualification for dealing with the subject is that I am not connected with the educational department, and that my opinions are those of a practical on-looker, deeply interested in the educational advancement of my countrymen.

To begin with, the present Matriculation Examination is the result of nearly half a century's experience of the ablest educationists in South India, notably Dr. Miller, and does not differ materially from the Examination I passed just forty years ago, except as regards the omission of a Text book in English and the addition of elementary science; it is the same old test: and it has proved an excellent portal to the inner apartments of our University. The universal opinion is that most of the youths who have passed it are quite fitted to enter on a University career. But there are some important defects in the test. The chief defect is the unavoidable circumstance that it is conducted in a foreign tongue. This great fact must be borne in mind in everything connected with this examination. For many years the results have been very poor, the passes seldom exceeding twenty per cent. The largest number of failures is in English, and what is called General Knowledge. The reason is obvious. The youthful candidates find it almost impossible to express their ideas—which are for the most part crude and immature

—with unmistakable clearness and precision in a language in which they do not think and which they do not habitually speak. Another defect is the lack of uniformity in the question papers and the marking of answers. The complaint every year is that one or more papers are unusually stiff, and that there has been a “slaughter of the innocents” in one or more subjects. Another important defect is the omission of the Text-book in English. A good English book or two, including both prose and poetry, is an essential aid in the formation of character. The first two books of Cowper’s *Task* I had to read when fifteen years old, made a most salutary impression on my juvenile mind; I can even now repeat by heart whole passages of that exceedingly interesting poem. But now wretched manuals dealing with grammatical quibbles and verbal riddles—though useful in their proper place—have usurped the place of sound literature which can alone instil right principles of conduct and place lofty ideas before the dawning mind. Still another defect, in my humble opinion, is the raising of the minimum for each subject, and of the minimum on the whole for a first class. Compared with the minimum marks required for English and two other branches of the much severer F.A. examination, the minima required for Matriculation are, it must be admitted, far too high for young lads scarcely able to express themselves intelligibly in a foreign language.

I have, however, already stated that the present Matriculation Examination is an excellent test on the whole and would, therefore, merely point out the direction in which it might be modified. First, the English Text-book must be restored; then there must be a Seventh Form in addition to the Sixth in all High Schools. Candidates seldom pass in the *first* year in which they appear. If there were a separate column for failed matriculates who pass in a certain year, there would be a large percentage of them. Owing to the foreign language in which instruction is given, and that chiefly by Indian teachers,



I should advocate an additional year's study for the Matriculation Examination. This would even tally with the average age at which lads have been matriculating during the last decade, viz., 18. Reckoning seven years for the seven Forms, and four years for the preparatory classes, a child of six entering a school for the first time ought to easily matriculate in his seventeenth year. Elementary Science must be separated from history and geography. This is merely a return to the old state of things. Now, neither the one nor the other gets its proper attention and, as a necessary result, the failures are disgraceful. Last year, nearly 5,000 failed, out of a total of 8,000, in General Knowledge alone. Another reform I venture to suggest is going back to the old minimum of 25% in each subject and 30% on the whole for a pass and 50% only for a first class. My idea is that by this means a very large number would take a first class. These might be admitted into Colleges for a University course; while those who pass in the second class should be considered to have passed the school final test. This may be considered a very radical proposal; but we shall have the pick of the rising generation, somewhere about a thousand or more, well equipped to embark on a University career. For the latter class of pupils there might even be one or two extra optional subjects included in the Matriculation curriculum. Let us not be frightened by the small number that will thus enter the University in the first year. When I was at the Cambridge Senate House one day watching the famous Mathematical Tripos Examination, I counted only sixty-seven candidates for all England!

Coming now to the F. A. Examination, it would be a great disaster to have this most useful test abolished. I do not think Dr. Bourne intends doing away with this, the Intermediate Examination of our University. I believe his idea is to modify it in such a way as to make it the future Matriculation Examination. If so, it would only be a change of name with a few desirable reforms. Reform, the F. A. certainly needs, but not

extinction. Forty years ago it was merely a kind of extended Matriculation Examination, but at present it is, in many respects, the same as the B. A. Examination of that period. It introduces the students to a higher and more classical English Literature, ancient history, without a knowledge of which no man can be called educated, and an excellent discipline of the mind in the shape of higher mathematics. Formerly, Matriculates took their B. A. Degree without undergoing an Intermediate Examination. It looks, indeed, as if we are now to go back to the old state of affairs. The modern F. A. is the ancient B. A., while the modern B. A., by reason of his specializing, is the ancient M. A. It is also most desirable that young men in the Mofussil who cannot migrate to the city or nearer towns, should spend at least two years with British graduates in a second grade college and benefit largely by their intercourse with men of superior culture and character. The F. A. is also the avenue for men intending to study medicine, teaching, engineering, and other professional arts. In most European Universities (and I have visited as many as eleven), there is always an intermediate or little-go examination which the student ought to pass before he proceeds to his degree; and is not a break in a four or even three years' monotonous course a welcome relief to the weary student?

But, in spite of all that can be urged on behalf of the F. A. Examination, it does require some changes in its curriculum. Bifurcation is a thing utterly unknown in India. Even in the West it is a plant of comparatively recent growth. Every villager in India is of opinion that his pial-school son ought one day to bloom into a B. A.; and so the University authorities think that every candidate for a degree must be well up in subjects for which he has neither ability nor aptitude. In this matter a correspondent in the *Madras Mail*, who signs himself "Option," has anticipated my views. I am of opinion that it is in the F. A. Examination that bifurcation ought to begin. Excepting language, all the other subjects, perhaps even history

being included, ought to be made optional along with other subjects equally essential and valuable to mental discipline. Even in the London Matriculation, there are several optional subjects. I should like to see the F. A. mathematics and physiology made optional along with logic, a classical language and a modern language, elementary mental science, ethics, natural history, botany and other branches of study which the student might choose, certainly at this stage of his education, according to his taste and capacity. I ask in all seriousness to what practical use a candidate would put his knowledge indicated by 30 out of 150 marks in mathematics, physiology or history? Again, are all F. A. men going to become engineers, doctors, and antiquaries? Why compel young men to study what they intensely dislike and for which they have no mental aptitude? Is that the proper course of a liberal education? How many British graduates can solve a simultaneous equation or prove that "similar triangles are to one another in the duplicate ratio of their homologous sides?" I am sure a reasonable proposal like this will not be characterized as revolution. In a sentence my view is this, that, as regards the educational structure, let us make the base broad and solid, but the apex narrow.

As an old graduate and Fellow and Chief Examiner of the University I have reason to complain that the education in our University is not as broad or complete as it ought to be. Is it not reasonable that a young man bearing the hall-mark of a University degree should possess some general knowledge and culture? To begin with, of course, the defect lies at the door of our school education and then penetrates our University course. I repeat what I have said elsewhere that in our University, for instance, a young man may become even a Master of Arts without the least conception of the faculties of his mind or their functions. The general complaint is that the judgment of our graduates is not so well developed as their memory. A B.A., it is said, knows no other bird but a crow. Distance or

height, he cannot measure by sight ; of the most common thing in the world he has little or no knowledge. No natural history is taught in our schools. Cannot such a state of things be remedied, and the Indian graduate be made a being with greater knowledge and broader culture ? Why should not mental science of a merely elementary nature be made compulsory for the B. A. course ? In the University of Copenhagen, the first year is invariably devoted to the study of philosophy. As to the Honours and Pass courses, I agree with Dr. Miller, that the present M.A. is a real B.A. with honours. One special argument strikes me which cannot be ignored. How are we to distinguish between the Pass B.A. and the Honours B.A. ? Is not the " M.A." affixed to the name more clear and effective than the cumbrous way of saying " B. A. with Honours " as in London and elsewhere ?

With regard to the University itself I think one or two changes are necessary. Ours has long been the model University of this country. Its degrees are valued all over India. The high standard of its tests is an acknowledged fact. Even the University Commission in their report scarcely criticised its methods and tests. Of its 10,200 graduates, not a few have risen to positions of eminence and bear a similar ratio to those of European graduates who have similarly distinguished themselves in their several walks of life. But like everything else a comparatively young University like ours has much to improve.

First, as to its constitution. When the weeding out of the Senate was being discussed, our senators claimed at least 150 Fellows ; against this, the Government of India by their Universities Act sanctioned only 100, *plus* five ex-officio Fellows. Now what has been done ? Madras has gone the other way and reduced even the 100 to 85. Of the 85 ordinary Fellows some 20 may well be honorary Fellows, by reason of their high position and general inability to attend meetings of the Senate ; while out of the honorary Fellows, a similar

number might well be ordinary Fellows by reason of their connection with education or their ability to attend meetings and take an active part in the deliberations of the Senate.

Next as to its teaching. On the Continent and also in Scotland, every University is a teaching University. Ours like London is a mere examining body. Before even the establishment of the Library I should like to see the Senate House put to better use than mere Convocations and Examinations, by the establishment of post-graduate or even ordinary lectures for the common benefit of all candidates for degrees. Prominent men might be invited from Britain and America to lecture on Literature, Science and *Æsthetics*. Such lectures would draw all students together and eventually form a national *esprit de corps* and stimulate self-culture and original research. There are certainly a host of things under heaven which are not and cannot be taught within College walls. Until our University rises to the occasion and assumes this its legitimate function, it will remain but a University in name, with no life or vigour of its own except to obey the orders of Government.

And lastly, a word as to its faculties. Some time ago Dr. Bourne pleaded for a Faculty of Science. I hope it will ere long be an accomplished fact. I plead for a Theological Faculty. To tell the truth ours is a godless University. In their extreme eagerness to practise neutrality in matters religious, our senators have run to the opposite pole, and assiduously encouraged all learning except that which relates to God, the soul and eternity. These are vital problems, the earnest investigation of which every University ought to aim as its ideal. "Of what avail is knowledge," says the Tamil poet, "if the worship of God is not inculcated?" Already Hinduism is being taught through the vernacular Text-books from the Matriculation up to M. A. They are simply honey-combed with mythical fables and devout praises of Indian deities. Let the three great religions of the world, Hinduism, Muhammadanism and Christianity whose votaries flourish in South India be carefully studied by

the students of the University. Experts in these theologies and in Comparative Religion might be appointed to examine in these most important subjects, as in mathematics and other sciences. The Bombay University has just adopted the London B. D. Examination and invites Indian candidates to appear for it. But what would be far better for a model University like ours is to have its own religious faculty, a Board of studies in Religion and a religious degree-examination of its own. I believe the Punjab University, the latest incorporated one in India, has an examination for the Bachelor of Oriental Studies Degree. My proposal is not too far in advance of the day. It is our University modelled after European systems, that is far behind the Oriental genius for religious culture. In India, from days of yore, learning has never been divorced from religion. In fact, knowledge worthy of the name, has always meant in India, merely, knowledge of God. And of all people, therefore, Indians must persevere and demand that a Faculty of Religion should be formed at a critical period like this when the University is undergoing a salutary reform.

#### 6.—MR. GLADSTONE.

To describe the public life of Mr. Gladstone is to write the history of England during the last sixty years,—probably to the end of the present century. As a statesman, thinker, orator and financier the Grand Old Man has so long loomed before the public view, that, whether in office or opposition, in the quietude of his study or on the public platform, his extended career has become almost identical with the growth and development of the English nation. For the welfare of that nation he has lived and laboured with as much zeal and earnestness as if its frowns had no more effect on his devotion to its interests than its smiles could make it more intense. And that nation, though often moved by the wave of a reactionary sentiment against its illustrious leader, has again and again placed its

destinies in his hands and submitted its affairs to his guidance, so that in his eighty-fourth year Mr. Gladstone is for the fourth time Premier of England. His name has become a household word throughout the British Empire. The interest of the public in the welfare of the veteran Premier is so great, that even the slightest indisposition is wired to all quarters of the globe. Mighty and momentous problems are awaiting immediate solution. Wales is clamouring for the disestablishment of its church, as the first step towards religious equality throughout the Empire, while the long-looked-for Home Rule Bill for Ireland has already been presented to the House of Commons. Other questions of a more or less vital importance are also pressing themselves on the attention of the octogenarian chief. England is on the eve of a glorious reform; and the Statesman who has already conferred on his country many a priceless boon is once more occupied with the execution of a programme, at once bold and brilliant. And let us hope that his life may be spared for a few years longer for the salvation of Ireland and the promotion of reform in the British Empire.

So much by way of preface. But the purpose of this paper is not so much to consider the political career as to discourse on the personal character of Mr. Gladstone and the salutary lessons it is calculated to impress on the minds of young Indians who are preparing themselves for the toils and prizes of public life in this country. Character, however, cannot be divorced from life. The two act and re-act on each other. The growth of life is essential to the development of character. In order, therefore, to form a more or less faithful estimate of the great Statesman's character, it is necessary to take a cursory view of his eventful life.

Mr. Gladstone was born at Liverpool in the year 1809. Though an Englishman by birth and education, the Premier is descended from an ancient Scotch family which before migrating to Lancashire, was known as the Gledstones. It is peculiar that in the case of one who loves England no less than Scotland,

neither country can altogether claim him as her own. His father was Sir John Gladstone, one of the merchant princes of Liverpool, afterwards a Baronet and an M. P., who died at the advanced age of 87, making ample provision for each of his children. Mr. Gladstone was sent to Eton at 12 years of age. According to contemporary testimony, he was then the "prettiest little boy that ever went to Eton." In this fashionable school the future premier worked hard at classics, and studied mathematics during holidays. While at school, young Gladstone was known as the pious, pure-minded, courageous, and humane youth, exerting his influence on all who came into personal contact with him. He took no delight in games, but he was fond of sculling and taking long, rambling walks in the delightful neighbourhood of Windsor. Of the Eton Debating Society he was a prominent member. His maiden speech before this juvenile body commenced with the significant words: "Sir, in this age of increased and increasing civilization." When 18 years old, the youthful student started a paper which he called the "Eton Miscellany," and which he conducted with remarkable ability till he left school. One fellow-student remarks about him at this time, "Gladstone is no ordinary individual;" another, the late Bishop of Salisbury, says, "I was a thoroughly idle boy; but I was saved from some worse things by getting to know Gladstone."

After this promising scholastic career, Mr. Gladstone read for six months under private tutors. In October, 1828, he entered Christ Church College at Oxford. Here he numbered among his fellow-students, young men who afterwards became distinguished as bishops or statesmen. An orator from Cambridge visited Oxford about this time, and having met Mr. Gladstone, wrote as follows:—"The man that took me most was the youngest Gladstone of Liverpool—I am sure a very superior person." At Oxford, Mr. Gladstone was "alike in study and conduct a model undergraduate." He studied Mathematics as well as Classics and gained honors in both. The course of



study must have given his gifted mind an excellent discipline. It is usually complained in this country that students have to acquire knowledge through a foreign tongue. But at Oxford it was worse. The student there had to bring up a score of Greek and Latin authors whose works he should have mastered very completely, besides the histories of Greece and Rome, Ethics, Logic and Divinity. The object of the examination was to test not so much the student's mere skill or knowledge, as his power of mastering his authors intelligently and usefully and the way in which he had been reading during his stay at College. Besides fortifying his mind with this rigorous but healthy exercise, Mr. Gladstone attended lectures on Hebrew, and Aristotle, the father of philosophy.

For a short time Mr. Gladstone was a prominent member, and latterly Secretary and President of the Oxford Union. It was at the meetings of this Society that the torrent of eloquence which has rolled through sixty long years with irresistible force, made its first feeble beginnings. Oxford was then as now a most congenial soil for the growth of the Toryism which the student had inherited from his father and grandfather, and learned to admire in the teaching and policy of his great master Canning. Bishop Wordsworth who knew him then, remarked that he "felt no less sure than of his own existence that Gladstone would one day rise to be Prime Minister of England." Thus the youth was father to the man. Mr. Gladstone's speeches were all directed against innovation of whatever kind in Church or State. As in duty bound, he opposed all liberal measures, notably the great Reform Bill of 1832. He was a firm believer in oligarchy; that is to say, that the privilege of Government was the birth-right of the few. The people should have no voice in the making or unmaking of laws. Such in brief was his creed. But the severe discipline he went through at Oxford during three years exercised a most salutary effect on his mind. It produced an "almost excessive exactness in the statement of propositions, a habit of rigorous definition, a micro-

scopic care in the choice of words, and a tendency to analyse every sentiment and every phrase, and to distinguish with intense precaution between statements almost exactly similar. From Aristotle and Bishop Butler and Edmund Burke he learned the value of authority, the sacredness of law, the danger of laying rash and inconsiderate hands upon the ark of State. In the political atmosphere of Oxford he was taught to apply these principles to the civil events of his time, to dread innovation, to respect existing institutions, and to regard the Throne and the Church as inseparably associated by Divine ordinance."

As at Eton so at Oxford Mr. Gladstone was well-known as the pious student. No one read the Bible more than he, or knew it better. Of his companions, a secular-minded fellow-student remarks, "Gladstone has mixed himself with the St. Mary Hall and Oriel set, who are really, for the most part, only fit to live with maiden aunts and keep tame rabbits." After leaving Oxford Mr. Gladstone travelled six months in classic Italy bent upon devoting his great talents, of which no doubt he was now fully conscious, to the service of his Master, but his father prevailed on him to seek election and enter Parliament. Had Mr. Gladstone had his choice and entered the ministry, the life of England's greatest Archbishop would still be unwritten.

In 1832—when only 22 years old—Mr. Gladstone presented himself as a candidate for Newark and issued his first manifesto in which he defined Liberalism as a desire for change which produced "along with partial good, a melancholy preponderance of mischief." He was returned at the head of the poll, but did not take his seat till January, 1833, when the first Reformed Parliament met for the first time. The Liberals of course were in the majority, but the Tories, always a compact and solid body were led by the great Sir Robert Peel. Then as now the social condition of Ireland occupied the attention of Government, along with slavery in the colonies, and the

misery of the poor in England. Mr. Gladstone made his maiden speech in reply to one of the Government resolutions and gracefully defended his father who had been attacked as a cruel slave-owner. He soon made his mark in the House which he has continued to adorn, astonish and command for quite two generations. For, within two years of his entrance into Parliament, the young member was appointed junior Lord of the Treasury and thus became a member of Government in the 25th year of his age.

Mr. Gladstone, however, did not give up his studies for the sake of his Parliamentary duties. To both he paid diligent attention. Homer and Dante were his constant companions; he also found time to go through the whole of St. Augustine's Works. It was at this time that his intimate and life-long friend, the late Bishop of Oxford, addressed him a characteristic letter, from which an extract or two may be given. "There is no height," writes Dr. Wilberforce, "to which you may not fairly rise in this country. You may at a future day wield the whole Government of this land; and if this should be so, of what extreme moment will your *past steps* then be to the real usefulness of your high station. If there has been any compromise of principle before, you will not then be able to rise above it; but if all your steps have been equal, you will not then be expected to descend below them. I say this to you in the sad conviction that almost all our public men act from the merest expediency; and that from this conventional standard it must be most difficult for one living and acting amongst them to keep himself clear. I would have you view yourself as one who may become the head of all the better feelings of this country; and suffer me to add that a deep and increasing personal religion must be the root of that firm and unwearied consistency in right, which I have ventured thus to press upon you." Thus, Mr Gladstone was early looked upon as the heir-apparent, as it were, to the Premiership of England. Just about this time there was a great revival in the Church,

and Mr. Gladstone, anxious to divert the current of controversy into a proper channel, published in 1838 his great work on "The State in its relations with the Church." It created a great sensation. His fundamental principle was that the State had a conscience and was, therefore, responsible for the inculcation of a particular religion, which the State was aware, was based on truth. Within a short time, the work reached a third edition. Baron Punsen, a great Statesman of the day, remarked, "Gladstone is the first man in England as to intellectual power." Even the brilliant essayist Macaulay wrote a critical review of the work and described the young author as the "rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories."

In 1839, at the ripe age of 30—an excellent example to all Indian young men—Mr. Gladstone married the eldest daughter of a Welsh Baronet, Sir Stephen R. Glynne, of Hawarden Castle, Flintshire. Sir Stafford Northcote, a former Secretary of State for India, gives the following contemporary estimate of Mr. Gladstone's position in the political firmament of 1842: "There is but one Statesman," he says, "of the present day in whom I have entire confidence; and with whom I cordially agree, and that statesman is Mr. Gladstone. I look upon him as the representative of the party, scarcely developed as yet, though secretly forming and strengthening, which will stand by all that is dear and sacred in my estimation, in the struggle which, I believe, will come one day between good and evil, order and disorder, the church and the world; and I see a very small band collecting around him and ready to fight manfully under his leading."

Mr. Gladstone now began to address himself to business-like problems and advocated Free trade, and his varied gifts asserted themselves in almost every branch of public life, as a natural result of which he becomes a member of the Cabinet at the early age of 33. He was made President of the Board of Trade. But only a year later, Mr. Gladstone found himself

in a critical position. The Government proposed to increase the grant to the Irish College at Maynooth—a question which he determined to study outside the walls of the Cabinet, and this he did by resigning his office, in spite of the protestation of his colleagues and friends—a rare example of independence of thought and action and a complete negation of self. It was now clear to his foes as well as friends that the young Statesman was no sordid place-hunter, but at the same time “a visionary not to be relied on or reckoned with.” Some even thought he had inflicted a lasting injury on his political career. But this was not to be. In 1845, a great potato famine prevailed in Ireland and Mr. Gladstone was brought in as Secretary of State for the Colonies. But the Free-trade principles he had recently adopted cost him his seat at Newark, but he succeeded in getting the Corn Laws repealed and Free Trade asserted as the gospel of commerce. Though he lost Newark, a better seat was in store for Mr. Gladstone. In 1847, he was elected for Oxford University which was then considered the most coveted prize of public life. This seat he held till 1865. Mr. Gladstone’s path to liberalism was now becoming more and more defined. He still clung with his old tenacity to existing institutions and practices, but at the same time advocated proposals and reforms which were purely of a Liberal complexion—evidently a period of transition through which the young minister’s life was now passing. The sudden death, however, of his great chief, Sir Robert Peel, broke up the party, and gave Mr. Gladstone another step in his advance towards the Liberal ranks.

Mr. Gladstone visited Naples in the Winter of 1850 and “instead of confining himself to those amusements that abound in Naples, instead of diving into volcanoes and exploring excavated cities, we see him going to courts of justice, visiting prisons, descending into dungeons, and examining great numbers of the cases of unfortunate victims of illegality and

injustice, with a view afterwards to enlist public opinion in the endeavour to remedy those abuses." The fact was that the Neapolitan king had banished or imprisoned about 20,000 persons on mere charges of political disaffection and treated them with the utmost cruelty in the public prisons. Mr. Gladstone's humanity was stirred to its depths and he addressed an open letter to Lord Aberdeen which created quite a sensation throughout Europe. It is said that this and subsequent letters played no inconsiderable part in the formation of the present Kingdom of Italy.

From this time forward we find Mr. Disraeli appearing on the scene. A new Government was now formed, in which Mr. Gladstone was for the first time made Chancellor of the Exchequer. His first budget was laid before the table of the House on April 18th, 1853—a memorable evening when the speech with which it was introduced lasted five hours and held the House spell-bound. The great assembly felt that a master of figures had made his advent applying the charms of rhetoric to grim finance and clothing with flesh and blood the dry bones of tax and tariff. Gladstone's place as the first financier in the realm was now indisputedly fixed. But the unfortunate Crimean war which followed this incident upset everything and filled England with dismay and disorder. The members of the Cabinet—being partly Whigs and partly Peelites—were not united. The Whig cry for war against Russia prevailed, and the Government at last drifted into war, the horrors of which are still fresh in the memory of many now living. A new Cabinet was formed with a liberal chief at its head, and Mr. Gladstone took office under him for the first time. But he had to resign almost immediately. "His sympathies were with Conservatives, his opinions, with Liberals; a dangerous dichotomy," adds his biographer, "for both parties involved." He had however a dear price to pay for his adhesion to Liberal principles. For, in 1865, he was turned out of Oxford; but not long after he was returned by South Lancashire.

Mr. Disraeli was now high in power. Shrewd and astute, a perfect master of sarcasm and political manoeuvre, the Hebrew leader first turned the Whigs out on a proposal of Reform and then brought up the very same proposal with a few more radical additions, and got it passed. At this juncture Lord Derby died and Mr. Disraeli became Prime Minister. It was now that Mr. Gladstone brought forward his famous resolutions for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, in an eloquent speech of three hours, containing, it is said, not one single superfluous word. Mr. Disraeli was defeated and Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister for the first time. This was in the year 1868. He ruled England six years.

Beginning with the abolition of the Irish Church as a State establishment, Mr. Gladstone introduced reform after reform in connection with tenant-rights, and education in Ireland, vote by ballot, ecclesiastical titles, religious tests in the Universities, popular education and the purchase of commissions in the army. As an instance of Mr. Gladstone's singular boldness it may be stated that when the bill for the abolition of the purchase of military commissions was thrown out by the Lords, he discovered by a happy coincidence that the right of purchase was held by a royal warrant and accordingly advised the Queen to rescind it—which was done—to the infinite rage of the Upper House. It was during his first premiership, that the celebrated 'Alabama' question came up. America and England had had a long and wearisome dispute about the injustice of allowing a privateer named 'Alabama' to have perpetrated repeated outrage on American vessels. From a war of words they were in danger of resorting to a war of swords. But the moral genius of the Premier rose to the occasion. He submitted the difference to an International Council which met at Geneva and gave its verdict—against England. Though England had to pay an indemnity, the horrors of war involving the loss of thousands of lives, the misery of many more and an outlay of millions of pounds,

were averted and a check placed upon civilized nations resorting to the barbarous arbitrament of the sword.

Mr. Gladstone brought in another Irish bill, and being defeated by a narrow majority of only 3 votes, he continued to hold the reins of power till the next General Election when the Tories were returned with a majority of forty-six. Mr. Gladstone now resolved to retire. He had laboured incessantly for 42 years. An Earldom was offered him, but he declined the honor, preferring rather to be the People's man. For a time he retired indeed into private life, but the exigencies of politics, and the straitened circumstances of his party, compelled him to issue once more into the arena of public life.

While in opposition, Mr. Gladstone published several able pamphlets, chiefly on theological subjects. Of his pamphlet on 'Vatican decrees' alone 125,000 copies were sold in a few weeks. The national mind which in 1874 had longed for a breathing time, was now turning once again towards the Liberal chief. The great Eastern Question was darkening the eastern sky. Owing to a revolt in Bulgaria, the Christians of this province had been outraged and massacred by the Turkish soldiers, and Russia had declared war against the Sultan. Mr. Disraeli was about to plunge England into a second Crimean whirlpool. But Mr. Gladstone rushed forth from his studies at Hawarden, and by both voice and pen, succeeded in stemming the tide, and averted the calamity of another war. When the general election took place in 1880, the Liberals were returned with an overwhelming majority, and Mr. Gladstone at their head.

Ireland with her woes and crimes, was the chief burden of the second administration. The Irish leaders would make no terms with any party which refused them self-government. After being imprisoned to secure the peace of Ireland, the 'uncrowned king' and his followers were released. This led to the resignation of the Irish Secretary. His successor and Secretary were then murdered in cold blood in Phoenix Park.



This outrage was followed by a Crimes Act of the utmost rigour. To add to all these troubles, the bombardment of Alexandria was distasteful to many Liberals no less than the Prime Minister himself. Reaction set in. And in 1885, Government, as it were, courted its own defeat on the Budget, when the Marquis of Salisbury became Prime Minister for the first time. But the ensuing election shewed that the great Ex-Premier still retained his hold on the nation and that the new Government was a short-lived one. For it resigned at the opening of Parliament and Mr. Gladstone once more kissed the hands of royalty and became Premier a third time.

It now leaked out that the venerable leader had fully espoused the cause of Home Rule. He had been studying the Irish problem ever since he entered Parliament and was now convinced that nothing short of Home Rule would remedy the evils of that miserable island. But this policy cost him the best of his followers, among whom were John Bright, Lord Hartington, Lords Derby and Selborne, Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan, who entered into a working alliance with the Tories and were called the Liberal Unionists. In this extremity Mr. Gladstone advised the Queen to dissolve Parliament and then appealed to the country. The electorate was called all of a sudden to support what it had till then been taught to condemn. Of course, the Tories were returned with a decided majority of one hundred ; and Mr. Gladstone resigned.

To quote the words of his biographer, " Mr. Gladstone now 76 years old, entered on an extraordinary course of physical and intellectual effort with voice and pen, in Parliament and on the platform, on behalf of the cause, defeated but not abandoned, of self-Government for Ireland. The exuberance of bodily and mental activity, the fertility of argumentative resource, and the copiousness of rhetoric which he threw into the enterprise, would have been remarkable at any stage of public life ; but continued into his 82nd year they are little less

than miraculous." And by this incessant and all but miraculous effort this wonderful man has brought the country—that is the greater part of electors—into sympathy with his policy. We now reach the present time. Only a few months ago, when Parliament was dissolved and a general election took place, the Liberals were returned with a majority of forty; and Mr. Gladstone is once more the Prime Minister of England. He has not only a very small working majority, but has to contend with different parties in the Liberal camp. But his faith is strong and his fervour deep; and we may hope that more than one mighty reform may be the crowning termination of a long and illustrious career.

We have now hastily and imperfectly traced the life and career of England's greatest son. We have followed him to Eton and Oxford, and thence to Parliament and the Cabinet. Let us now turn our eyes for a while on his character, and consider some of the most prominent features, remembering the poet's words that the "lives of great men all remind us that we can make our lives sublime." A whole volume might be devoted to the study and analysis of a character so rich and complex, and so full of lessons for the rising generation.

The feature that is sure to strike first is the Premier's laboriousness. If Johnson was a giant of literature, Mr. Gladstone is a giant of labour. As a pupil at School and as a student at Oxford, he was famous for his studious habits. At Eton, he was called in the language of that School, a 'sap.' Nothing could interrupt his regular hours of study at Oxford. Although nature has endowed Mr. Gladstone with extraordinary talents, he owes his greatness no less to the incessant activity of his mind and body. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to meet with a public man in England who has 'laboured so hard' and so continuously during a long period of 70 years. In the midst of the din and bustle of political life, in the midst of the pressing and harassing cares of statesmanship, in the midst of travel involving changing

circumstances and frequent public engagements, in the midst of great preparations for the effectual carrying out of bills in the face of determined opposition, Mr. Gladstone has always found time to cultivate his literary tastes and publish to a wondering public the results of his deep research and thought. He is not the graduate that wraps up his books in his academic gown after Convocation is over. Mr. Gladstone's real student life began where the average often ends. It has continued even to the ninth decade of his life. During the recent election when his prospects were trembling in the scale, he wrote with his own hand some 30 pp. of Ms. on an abstruse subject and forwarded it to the Oriental Congress. Since then he has written an elaborate and effective reply to the Duke of Argyll's article on "Home Rule" in the North American Review. Hardly has the public begun to digest the contents of this contribution, before Reuter wires his lecture at Oxford on "Mediæal Universities," which he has since carefully revised for the Press. His recent tours through Wales, marked by extempore speeches as well as risky excursions in the snows of Snowdon, indicate very clearly that labour of mind and body for its own sake has become a part of his nature, yea, of his very being. Mr. Gladstone has evidently lived on the principle that he rests most who works most. "By ceaseless rotation," says the poet, "all that is exists." He exults in labour, seeking relaxation in mere change of labour. It may be urged that his iron constitution explains the mystery of his laboriousness. But even of this iron fabric he is himself the builder. At forty or forty-five the career of many a promising Indian often terminates to the bitter disappointment of his friends and admirers, while many a brilliant and highly-gifted young man, unwilling to ally the force of labour to the promptings of his genius, leads a listless, useless life, until he finds himself lost in the crowd. This remarkable feature of Mr. Gladstone's character teaches us that though genius may prompt, it is industry that performs.

An intense earnestness has always characterized the Premier's conduct in private as well as public life. Mr. Gladstone is nothing if not earnest. He is ever in passionate quest of the truth. If laboriousness has helped his genius, earnestness has sustained his laboriousness. Even in the formation of his opinions, Mr. Gladstone has always been thoroughly in earnest. His mind is naturally conservative, while his early training and associations have made it still more so. He has a natural aversion to introduce innovations or do away with ancient institutions. His eloquent opposition to the Reform Bill while a student at Oxford was once taken advantage of by his great opponent, Lord Beaconsfield, and cast in his teeth some 36 years afterwards as an instance of glaring inconsistency. His political foes have often charged him with fickle-mindedness in his doctrines, in which even his friends have sometimes acquiesced. But the fact that it took Mr. Gladstone 27 long years to reach the point of political conversion, unmistakably demonstrates the passionate earnestness of his character. It was not by a leap and a bound that he tore himself away from the ranks of the Tories and joined those of the Liberals. Nothing but the downright honesty of purpose with which he grasps the great problems before him can explain the mighty changes he has gone through in his political career. He himself calls it a 'political death.' Not expediency or transient popularity, not even the lust of power which is often attributed to him, but a deep, moral earnestness has been the guiding star of his eventful life. His powerful mind is plastic like the age he lives in, has ever been open to conviction. Bias, prejudice, and mere worship of time and custom vanish before the ardour of his earnestness. Even defeat does not make him despair, but only stimulates him to greater fervour and energy in the pursuit of his object. His public career has been one continued series of conflict with evil in one form or another, and but for the singular earnestness which has all along sustained him, in season and out of season,

he would long since have succumbed to the might of opposing forces, and marred his cause with abortive attempts and half-hearted measures.

Mr. Gladstone's humanity is also a feature of his character which is worthy of our admiration. While at school he "once stood forth as the champion of some wretched pigs which it was the custom to torture at Eton Fair on Ash Wednesday, and when bantered by his school-fellows for his humanity, offered to write his reply in good round hand upon their faces." His sympathy is wider than the watery bulwark of Britain, and extends to the whole human race. He loves his country dearly and well, but he loves the world no less. It is said that his love of England is swamped and lost in the enthusiasm of humanity. In the famous speeches which he delivered in connection with Home Rule, Don Pacifico, the Alabama, and the Eastern question—in fact, on every topic which had any bearing whatever on the law of nature and the law of God, Mr. Gladstone has always had the moral courage to stand forth not so much as the champion of his country as that of mankind at large. With a Premier therefore of such universal sympathy and world-wide generosity, India must consider herself peculiarly fortunate. To Mr. Gladstone and men of a similar type of character must she chiefly look up for support and co-operation in all her lawful aspirations. It was a Gladstonian Government which gave this country the Indian Councils Act.

Another trait in the Premier's character is his habit of special studies. Whenever he finds himself freed for the time being from the burden of public cares, he returns with immense delight to his library of 30,000 volumes; and in this Temple of peace, as it is called, he devotes himself to his favourite pursuits as if he had no other work to do. If he is not the greatest Greek scholar in the world, he has been a life-long student of the greatest living authorities in the world. A German divine has stated that Mr. Gladstone is the greater

theologian of England. Is this all? He revels in figures; the working out of puzzling problems of finance affords him peculiar delight. "There cannot be two opinions about his love of beauty. It is a many-sided and far-reaching enthusiasm. Beauty in nature, in art, in literature, appeals to him with irresistible force. For what is merely rare, or curious, or costly, he does not care a jot; but he kindles with contagious enthusiasm over a fine picture, a striking statue, a delicate piece of artistic workmanship." Mr. Gladstone's fondness for tree felling must not be omitted. For 30 years has this man kept up this peculiar exercise and derived from it both pleasure and profit. Side interests have a special value for men of an active and emotional temperament. When judiciously indulged in they serve the double purpose of a sedative and tonic to both mind and body, and exert a most invigorating influence on the onward course of life.

We have no time to dwell at length on the eloquence of our Premier. He is indisputably the first Orator of the day. Though his diction lacks the Anglo-Saxon terseness and homely idiom of John Bright, the grand and sonorous periods of Edmund Burke, the brilliant wit and scathing sarcasm of Lord Beaconsfield, yet, taken as a whole, it is the richest, deepest, and most refined language that any member has ever wielded in the House of Commons. Often has he held even the Opposition spell-bound by the magic of his eloquence, and then thanked them humbly for their patient hearing. In passionate earnestness, in their lofty moral tone, in the most scrupulous choice of words, in their abundance of figure and illustration, in the depth and fulness of knowledge of the subject in hand, in their masterly statement of detail, in the strength and cogency of argument, in their irresistible appeals to the nobler sentiments of human nature, in their power of combating and exposing the fallacies of an opposite view, in the inimitable grace of voice and delivery, the speeches of Mr. Gladstone have never been equalled by those of his contemporaries,

much less by those of his predecessors in the world of oratory. Nothing can exceed the enormous power he on a bleak October day wielded over 20,000 persons who had assembled on Blackheath, most of whom were determined to hiss and hoot him, when, by the sheer force of his fascinating eloquence, he subdued the multitudes before him and turned their opposition into active sympathy. "The memory of other speeches may grow faint, but the effect of many of Mr. Gladstone's Parliamentary orations must remain indelibly stamped upon the minds of those who heard them. While he has a powerful fund of sarcasm and is not destitute of a certain kind of humour, who can equal him in comprehensiveness, in mastery of detail, in moral fervour and intensity of feeling? He has captivated alike the learned and the illiterate causing both to thrill beneath the spell of his impassioned and irresistible periods. While the mellifluous flow of his language has charmed the intellect, the elevation of his sentiments has touched the spirit of his auditors, and quickened into vitality the higher emotions of humanity."

It is sometimes asked if Mr. Gladstone is a genius. According to the usual acceptance of the word, which restricts it to the small body of men who are creators in the realm of literature, politics, science, art or religion or any other sphere of human thought, Mr. Gladstone is not a genius. The genius makes the age, not the age the genius. Nature, by the mere richness and variety of the rare gifts she has bestowed on Mr. Gladstone, has equipped him for a far wider, if somewhat humbler, sphere of usefulness in which he has found a congenial exercise for those gifts. He belongs rather to the front ranks of great men who influence vastly the age they live in and are in their turn influenced by the various forces of that age, who though they have not created empires, discovered new laws of nature, reformed an old, or established a new religion, or created characters out of their imagination, have yet by their voice and pen laboured for the cause of truth and justice,

raised their country to a pinnacle of moral greatness, and conferred lasting benefits on civilized mankind. In this latter and wider sense Mr. Gladstone may be regarded as a genius. He has done more for the real greatness of England than any other public man; and only posterity can estimate rightly the invaluable service he has rendered to his people and his God.

"In order," however, "to form the highest and the truest estimate of Mr. Gladstone's character, it is necessary to see him at home. There are some people who appear to the best advantage on the distant heights, elevated by intellectual eminence above the range of scrutiny, or shrouded from too close observation by the misty glamour of great station and great affairs. Others are seen at their best in the middle distance of official intercourse and in the friendly but not intimate relations of professional and public life. But the noblest natures are those which are seen to the greatest advantage in the close communion of the home, and here Mr. Gladstone is pre-eminently attractive. His extraordinary vigour and youthfulness of mind and body, his unbroken health and buoyant spirits form an atmosphere of infectious vitality. He delights in 'hospitality,' and, to quote a phrase of Sidney Smith's, 'receives his friends with that honest joy which warms more than dinner or wine.' The dignity, the order, the simplicity and, above all, the fervent and manly piety of his daily life, form a spectacle far more impressive than his most magnificent performances in Parliament or on the platform.'

But the paramount factor of Mr. Gladstone's character is his religiousness. He is essentially a religious man;—religious,—not in the sense in which a scrupulous observance of the outward forms and ceremonies of one's religion is called 'religion,' especially in this country where every one is religious,—but in the right sense in which Mr. Gladstone's religion is—"an intensely vivid and energetic principle, passionate in



its emotional side, definite in its theory, imperious in its demands, practical, visible and tangible in its effects. It runs like a silver strand through the complex and variegated web of his long and chequered life." True religion then, is the ground-work of Mr. Gladstone's noble career; the mainspring of all his actions. His judgment has indeed sometimes erred for want of sufficient light and thought, and led him into serious mistakes, but his religion has ever come to his rescue, and enabled him to seek further light and change his policy. Without this religiousness Mr. Gladstone might have enjoyed far greater popularity, especially among the aristocracy, and probably played far more brilliant games in politics, but all this would have been at the expense of the "eternal verities of truth and justice." During his long and eventful career Mr. Gladstone has been a standing rebuke to the class of thinkers and writers who assert that the Bible is a blasted rock, and Christianity an exhausted force as a spring of human activity. Mr. Gladstone looks at every question, whether great or small, with a religious eye. When topics are brought up for debate or deliberation, and party feeling runs high, this religious statesman does not care to think of party or people, prestige or success, but simply asks his inner self if the proposal or whatever the topic may happen to be, is right in the sight of God, the Sovereign of the Universe; and when once convinced that it is, to the best of his knowledge, and consistent with the demands of justice and equity, be it Home Rule for Ireland, or affirmation for atheists, he works for its ultimate success with all the ardour and energy of religious enthusiasm. This is the conduct that exalts religion from the sphere of mere form and theory to the throne of life and principle; and this is the kind of religion that India needs so much at the present day.

Let the great statesman himself conclude this brief sketch. Being asked the other day, what he regarded as the brightest hope of the future, the venerable Premier replied, "I

should say a maintenance of faith in the Invisible. This is the great hope of the future, the mainstay of civilisation. And by that I mean *a living faith in a personal God*. I do not hold with a stream of tendency. After sixty years of public life I hold more strongly than ever this conviction, deepened and straightened by long experience of reality and the nearness and personality of God."

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### 7.—ASSOCIATIONS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE.

Mr. Chairman, gentlemen and members of the Elephant Gate Association,—When I was desired to address you on this occasion nothing troubled me so much as the choice of a suitable subject. It is indeed no easy task to fix upon some line of thought, the treatment of which could at the same time instruct and inspire us in the daily duties of our life. Viewed in this light, therefore, the field of choice, as regards worthy topics, is necessarily limited. Much that might be said on such subjects, has already been said and well said too. There is scarcely anything left for the average thinker. Fortunately, however, the opening of a new Association has naturally led me to think about the nature and importance of what might be termed "Association life," in the present transition state of India. In forming Associations at various centres and for various objects, India has entered upon an altogether new phase of moral life. Forty years ago, Associations of all kinds in this city could hardly be counted on the fingers. In Black Town (now Georgetown) there was only one that I can now remember, the few members of which occasionally met together for a debate among themselves, or a lecture by some noted person. Now, there is an Association in almost every corner of the city. In fact, so many are coming into existence that one can hardly take a lowest census of the whole. It may be that many of these are started by persons who are not yet, either by age or education, fitted to participate in Association life. Still

the truth must not be overlooked, that the formation of Societies is a sign of the times—a sign though not of any remarkable intellectual activity, at least of a awakening national life. To me, therefore, the opening of a new and a much needed Association in your neighbourhood, having for its object the mental, moral and social advancement of its members, and through you, of the people at large, is a matter for sincere rejoicing ; and in offering you my hearty congratulations, I desire to take advantage of this opportunity and make a few disjointed remarks on “ Indian Associations and their influence on Indian progress.”

We all know of course what an Association is. It is a society of persons combined for some special object. It may be called a Club, Guild, Union, League or Society ; and it may have anything for its object, varying, for instance, from the study of the stars to the smoking of a cigarette. But so long as men continue to combine for a common object, and meet from time to time at a common place in furtherance of that object, the purpose of an Association is fully served. In England, Association life has undergone an immense growth. There every party has its league, every profession its club, every trade its union, and every craft its guild. Of religious societies alone, it is said, there are upwards of three hundred and fifty. There is not a shade of religion or political opinion, however meagre or indistinct, but as an organisation to strengthen and propagate it. Every branch of science and philosophy has a society of its own. In a word, every distinct interest is conserved and promoted by the combined effort of a society.

In India, it is far otherwise. Association life here is just beginning to manifest itself. Indian Associations, and especially those of Madras with which we are immediately concerned, have a strong family likeness, in being very largely social clubs or literary societies where a paper is occasionally read on some literary or social topic. Speciality or vigorous activity is not yet a general characteristic of Indian Association

life. Bengal and Bombay are somewhat in advance of Madras. Some time ago I was pleased to meet a Calcutta M.A. sent down here on a mission by an Ethnological Society of Bengal to enquire into and report upon the manners and customs of the people here. There is also a Science Association in Calcutta, while Bombay can boast even of an Anthropological Society. Madras Association life, therefore, is still in an infantile state.

We are not, however, to despise the day of small beginnings. To India, Association life is somewhat foreign. The celebrated Madura College, or the Tamil Sangam, was rather a guild of literary men, anxious to maintain the excellence of Tamil literature than an aggressive association, having something of the positive as its element. The slowness of the growth of Association life, or the imperfect character of its development, is but natural law; and this circumstance ought not to discourage any town of Madras' welfare. It is the strongest trees that take the longest to grow. The graceful plantain reaches maturity within six months, yields its delicious fruit, and then it dies, while the sturdy palm takes 20 years to grow but lasts a hundred, and in the end grows a most valuable tree. Association life ought, therefore, to be tenderly nurtured and carefully cultivated. Man being a social animal, his instincts prompt him to seek the companionship of his fellows, so far then the desire to form Associations is natural to everyone. But for a healthy and beneficial development of Association life, India is indebted to the culture which flows from the West.

We should not confound Associations with College Societies. The latter are for students, the former for grown-up men. At College, membership in a Society is more or less compulsory, while in subsequent active life, membership in an Association is entirely voluntary. Members of a College Society are mostly youths, kept under the restraint of discipline, and their behaviour and operations are under the general control of some

responsible Professor or Tutor. In an Association on the contrary, the members are independent adults, with perfect freedom to regulate their own affairs, and absolutely free from external control, except their own. Even as to choice of subjects there is a contrast. In the one case it is limited; in the other, it is comparatively unlimited. The relation between the two is similar to that between theory and practice. When I was taught Pitman's Phonography, I managed to get up the alphabet in two or three weeks. But, on undertaking to write down a spoken sentence, I utterly failed. On seeing my disappointment, my Professor naively remarked, "you need long practice." Thus what is learnt during a four years' College life (which is far too short) has to be patiently practised during perhaps half a century of Association life. While at College, the foundation of the student's character is afforded ample material wherewith to raise the superstructure. To change the figure, the seeds of character which have been sown at College are by the Association made to sprout and grow and thrive into fruit-bearing trees. The habits of close study of a given subject, patient research, punctual attendance to duty, patient consideration of a question, subordinating a lower to a higher pleasure when the call is clearly for the latter, and the virtues of moderation in tone and sentiment, self-restraint, moral courage, polemic courtesy, enthusiasm for a cause once deliberately espoused, the eternal verities of truth, righteousness and love,—these and a host of others too numerous to mention, which as a student one has to be taught to learn and value and to a little extent practise in his Society, can only be properly cultivated (properly because voluntarily) by an active life-long membership in an Association. In short, Association life is the continuity of College life; what is born in the one, grows and develops in the other.

But it may be asked, why join an Association at all? Cannot all these admirable qualities be practised and perfected in the home and at the office? Those who have any experience of

office work—such as usually falls to the lot of many a young graduate—know full well that it is not particularly favourable to the cultivation of the higher virtues. If it promotes anything at all, it is a rather one-sided character, moving only in a particular groove, and caring little or naught for the welfare of others. Besides, there is little or no time left to move socially with one's fellow-clerks. As regards home life in India—where a home is but rarely met with—in which joys and occupations of a more refined nature may be shared in by all the members of a household, though it is true that like charity every good thing should begin at home, it is equally true that it should not end there. Every man has his neighbour; and there are more neighbours in need of our aid and advice than those of our household. Therefore, between the home and the office, where it is taken for granted that our special duties are duly discharged, the Association in the most suitable sphere for the healthy and unrestricted growth of our many-sided character. And this for several reasons.

*First.*—By joining an Association the individual is drawn as it were, out of himself. In other words, selfishness, to the exercise of which there is a great temptation in the home and in the office, is, to say the least, steadily opposed, discouraged and weakened in the Association Room. Even if a member does nothing but attend a meeting once in a way, it must be regarded as an aid to the growth of unselfishness. The hour or two thus spent is taken away from some selfish or domestic enjoyment and sacrificed to the interests of the Association. Even official rivalry has to recede before Association friendliness. In course of time, social instincts are strengthened and developed.

*Secondly.*—Association life tends to widen one's views of things and broaden one's sympathies for one's fellowmen. A new world is opened before the member. He who has hitherto confined his attention to the needs and troubles of his family, now begins to think about the evils and epidemics of his neigh-

bourhood. He discovers the fact that his family is after all only one of the many units which make up the world represented by his Association. Never before did he so forcibly realize the axiom that the "whole is greater than its part," or its corollary that to care for the welfare of Society, is to care for that of the individual. This is not a small item in the growth of his character.

*Thirdly.*—By means of the Association, the member is brought into close and constant contact with the cultured, or at least the best educated minds of his neighbourhood. By such contact, the mind weary with the day's drudgery and routine, becomes refreshed, receives new thoughts and fresh impulses. In the case of a discussion, whether of a literary, social or political nature, each member, if he has discharged his duty aright, contributes his share of well-thought and well-digested views or facts to the common store and all return home richer and wiser than they left it. Erroneous and hasty conclusions give way before the keen-edged razor of logic, while petty prejudices and baseless beliefs gradually vanish before the light of reason and judgment. Hoary custom is dethroned, and goodness and utility are invested with supreme authority. Some of these treasures are carried home from time to time and placed before the members of his family, who, however, are not in a position to estimate them at their real worth; still he continues the struggle with the hope of ultimate success. Thus even the family does not escape the influence of Association life.

*Fourthly.*—Associations are excellent aids to both Government and people. The Association representing as it does the people whose leaders the members are, and possessing an intimate and accurate knowledge of their wants and grievances, cannot fail to command the respect and confidence of Government. *Vox populi vox Dei*, is an old saying. The voice of many intelligent men is stronger than that of one. The representations of bodies like the local Chamber of Commerce,

the Maha Jana Sabha, carry great weight, and are, on this account, not lightly set aside. Much however depends on the members of the Association. Some young Associations running mad with their ardour for political privileges, assume a needlessly hostile attitude to Government, and instead of helping only harass our rulers, by abusively-worded resolutions and clamorous protestations. Not that I disapprove of criticism. But one must master the art, before one can sit in judgment on the doings of one's superiors. On the other hand, some strong associations have organs of their own, through which they make their voice heard by those in authority.

*Fifthly*.—Associations are also effective social reformers. They are one of the uncompromising opponents of the caste-system. Men of all castes meet on the same footing in the common Association Room. Granting for the sake of argument, that the Brahmin enters it with exalted notions regarding his person and position, and a Sudra painfully conscious of his humbler birth, they soon come to discover that priority in the Association is decided not by birth or caste but, solely by character and talents. Associations thus unconsciously create a new caste,—*viz.*, the caste of character—the only caste which is known and owned by enlightened nations. When members meet together, the old social restrictions as to food and drink, are greatly relaxed. Actual inter-dining of a public nature has not yet taken place, but the time is not far distant when Association life will help members to realize like Englishmen that mutual regard or friendship invariably demonstrates itself somewhere about the dining table.

*Sixthly*.—Original research is not one of the least benefits of Association life. Wherever Associations are organized for the encouragement of scientific investigation, or literary research, the members feel greatly stimulated in their efforts in this direction. Facilities in the form of valuable libraries, and inducements like titles, scholarships and other rewards, render such Associations excellent nurseries for the advancement of



knowledge. What inventions and discoveries in science, what additions to the sum total of the world's knowledge, what enhancement of human comforts, what new methods of manufacture, what novel applications of well-known laws of nature, what increase of geographical lore, what progress in Paleography, may not be, directly or indirectly, traced to the learned societies of Europe and America? True, Madras cannot boast of any such institutions. But such will yet come into existence even in lethargic India. As the Indian mind gets more and more cultured, and its faculties are *educated*, that is to say, actually drawn forth and developed to a fuller extent, the desire for patient research and toilsome experiments will overcome, at least in the case of some, the desire for lighter labours and larger incomes. We cannot all become Edisons or Spensers and make the world ring with the praise of our inventions or discoveries. Still, original research in any department of knowledge as one of the objects of an Association, will do much to brace the mind and quicken the inductive faculty. Even so humble a pursuit as the study of the fauna and flora of a small village cannot fail to confer its reward.

*Lastly.*—Membership in an Association is an unconscious training for an intelligent participation in the political life of the land. Of course in these days of small beginnings everybody considers himself an expert in politics, and looks upon an attack on the Government as a triumphant feat in statesmanship. But such ignorance will in speedy course pass away like the doll-playing mania of little girls. The very qualities which make up an efficient and useful Association man will in course of time enable him to take part in politics, provided he adds thereto the requisite knowledge of his country and its needs. One must however pass through many a stage of Association life, before one can hope to contribute to the political life of one's nation. Look at the Indian National Congress, of which our honoured Chairman is a leading member. Though its members are counted by the thousand at its annual gather-

ings, we are well aware of the fact that it is only about a score or two of able and well-informed men that are the life and soul of this large movement, and guide its transactions from year to year. They have not attained to this high position by a leap and a bound. From their youth up they have to struggle through the various phases of Indian Association life, and meet with many a rebuff and many a fall, before they find themselves, perhaps after a generation of persistent effort, on the topmost rung of the political ladder. Anglo-Indians may smile with scorn at what seems to them an Indian play at politics. The demands of the Congress may be unreasonable and exorbitant, its resolutions needlessly strong and its speeches for the most part crude and acrimonious. And yet the reflex influence of this gigantic Association on the national life of India cannot be adequately gauged by the present generation, whether of foes or friends. The Congress is slowly creating a nation where formerly there was none; and to that nation it is communicating the power of thought and speech. What small and obscure Associations aim at in an insignificant degree, the Congress achieves on a royal scale. And the Congress itself is the highest Indian development of Association life.

These then are some of the advantages of Association life that I have endeavoured to place before you. Others we have no time to dwell upon in this brief address. I trust that by this time it must be evident to most of us that Indian Associations have an important place to fill among the various agencies which are at work for the welfare of India. In every enlightened country the usual factors which in a smaller or greater degree, make up its national life may be said to be its Home life, its School life, its College life, its Association life, its political and its Religious life. Some of those are distinct forces, exerting their influence on those who come under their sway. Such are the family, the school and the college. Others are of a more general nature affecting every other force, and in their turn are themselves affected by the

rest. Such are politics and religion. I should look upon the Association as a link between these two groups of forces, partaking of the nature of both and yet playing a most prominent part in the formation of national public opinion. The colour and even the lighter shades of the political horizon are mostly produced by the contributory tints of Association life.

In India, these forces are neither so varied nor so fully active. Under the present circumstances and for some decades to come, we cannot count upon Indian home life and religious life to exert any perceptible influence on national progress. Some observers are of opinion that the case is just the reverse. Political life is still in an embryonic stage. The chief Indian forces, therefore, are those emanating from the school and the college, and the Association. These then are the factors which for the present co-operate towards the national life of India. In other words, the national stream, which has just begun to flow, but which is so very small and feeble that it is all but ignored in the political geography of the world, is being fed by three little tributaries which flowing respectively from the schools and colleges of India pour their waters into the third. Thus Associations are the chief feeders of the national life. On them depends its character, its progress, its very life. The time will come, (perhaps it is still very remote), when the national stream will receive fresh tributaries from both family and religion. Till then, however, a great responsibility will rest upon Indian Associations. Armed with the instruction and discipline they have received from school and chiefly college life, it rests with them almost entirely, as being voluntary workers, to make or mar the future of their country. Glorious indeed is their goal and well worth the race.

Individual effort has of course much to commend it. A Gambetta or a Garibaldi may be worth all the Associations of a country. But not to every man is given the fire of patriotism or the magic spell of eloquence. Government has of late been encouraging the formation of literary and other societies which

is in itself an acknowledgment that Associations are essential factors in moulding the social and intellectual life of a nation.

Such being the place of Associations in the progress of India the duty of educated Hindus is unmistakably clear. Every Hindu who feels his responsibility in this direction and desires to become a unit in the national life of his country, ought to join an Association, or if there is none, help in forming one, wherever his lot may be cast. India must be honey-combed with living, active Associations. Even Vernacular Associations must be organised among those who are not acquainted with English. But the lead in such cases, must for obvious reasons, be in the hands of one or two educated men. In speaking of Associations and Association life I have referred to the ideal rather than the actual. There are a great many nominal, sleeping Associations which Kumbhakarna-like wake up but once a year and then go to sleep. Such sleepy Societies should either cease to exist or at least be lashed into healthy activity. Every Association must have some special object in view and every member must set to work with heart and soul for the furtherance of that object. Speciality is the order of the day. Other objects may be included, but the best energy and the greatest attention must be devoted to the one special end in view whatever that end may be. For this purpose, Associations must diligently and impartially search for the highest ideals in the world and keep them ever before their mind's eye. Whether such lofty subjects as poetry, philosophy, religion or politics, or such humble ones as sanitation, rates, and taxes, primary education or roads and streets, are taken up, whatever the special pursuit may be, the most perfect ideals in each department must be sought, studied, and persistently followed. Every Taluq town in this Presidency ought to have a strong central Association—one whose influence might be felt throughout the Taluq, whose social and moral progress ought to be the chief anxiety of every such Association. There must, however, be a pre-

ponderating element of the non-official class, so as to make the society independent in the expression of its views or the performance of its work. Representatives from these might form a still stronger Association in the District town. In this manner the whole country could be united together in one common Association, working by means of its numerous branches, for the endless progress of the Indian nation. And when India, roused from the slumber of centuries and released from many a self-inflicted wrong, rises in the scale of nations and at last takes her place among the great powers of the world, it will be found that among the many agencies that will have contributed to this grand and glorious result, Associations, such as I have been pleading for, have not played a mean and unimportant part.

And now, gentlemen, let me bring these remarks to a close. Says the poet, "Breathes there the man with soul so dead, who ne'er to himself hath said: This, this is my native land?" Let not this charge be laid at your door. You have been reminded of your duties, your responsibilities to your neighbours and to your country. The importance of Association life has been emphasized. It has been pointed out as an excellent channel along which your influence could flow and enrich the great stream of national life and national progress. So then, gentlemen, whether you are members of this or that Association, or of none at all, and trusting in the aid and guidance of the God of the Universe, work with a purpose, work steadily, work against all odds, work for the public weal; and the blessing of God will rest on you and your country.

### 8.—A ROMAN ALPHABET FOR TAMIL.

(A PROPOSAL TO REDUCE THE 247 TAMIL CHARACTERS TO 17.)

THE tendency of the present age is in favour of economy: economy as regards time, strength, labour and money. The object of this paper is to prove that by the adoption of a

man alphabet both the Tamil language and those who use it will be immensely benefited, and that the change in the forms of its characters will be quite in keeping with the demands of the age.

The time-honoured Tamil alphabet consists of 247 distinct characters. To identify, and to learn to read and write these characters is a laborious, time-consuming task. Fancy a young child five or six years plodding at these puzzling symbols. The difficulty is so great that children are made to trace the characters on sand. It is said of Ziegenbalg, the first Protestant Missionary to India, that he actually squatted on the ground and learnt the characters by practising them in this crude way. Any attempt therefore to reduce this number to a minimum cannot but be welcome. My belief is that by a careful adaptation of Roman characters, the Alphabet may be reduced to 17 symbols. I propose *a, i, u, e, o* for the five short vowels, the same when dotted becoming long ; and *ai* and *au* for the two diphthongs. This disposes of the 12 vowels. For the 18 consonants the characters may be as follows : *k, ñ ; c, ñ̃ ; d, ñ̇ ; t, n ; p, m ; y, r, l, v, ñ̇, l̇ ; ř, n*,—only eleven for 18 sounds. Among these characters I dot, or mark otherwise, only such as do not occur frequently. The 17th character may be a colon : representing the Tamil *ḥ*, equivalent to the aspirate *h*, but seldom used and fast running into disuse in modern Tamil prose.

By the employment of Roman characters we shall get rid of the 216 animated consonants each of which has a distinct character in Tamil. It is this redundant multiplicity of symbols that presents the greatest difficulty to the juvenile learner, and all writers, whether old or young ; whereas the child would soon be able to master the 16 characters—which are even ten less than those of English. The dots need give but little trouble. They are no more than the dotting and crossing used in the ordinary English characters.

Owing to the large number of the Tamil characters, handwriting becomes, or rather has become, necessarily slow and

laborious ; to make matters worse, Tamil is very largely a polysyllabic language ; while prose is worse than poetry. This adds greatly to the difficulty of caligraphy. One can write an English letter much more quickly than a Tamil one. Another great defect of the present alphabet is that the written characters cannot—without penalty—be joined as in English writing. I say without penalty, for then there is formed what is called “chain writing”—which is so largely used in cutcherries, but which to the ordinary reader is quite undecipherable. If the Roman alphabet were adopted, one could write much faster and at the same time make his writing quite legible.

The Roman alphabet would also admit of the employment of an endless variety of type—a fact which would greatly reduce the bulk of books and their cost as well. The present so-called *Tamil Pocket Bible* is as large as a bulky English Bible. I do not see why it should not be reduced to one-fourth its present size. Some time ago I published a *Dictionary* of about 10,000 Tamil Proverbs. Lest the bulk of the volume should increase very largely, I did not translate the proverbs into English, but contented myself with single-line hints, &c. But Dr. Fallon published a similar *Dictionary* of Hindustani Proverbs (some 12,000) translating each and even interspersing them with pithy stories and anecdotes, but as it was all printed in the Roman character the result is that his book is only about half as bulky as mine. I am determined to adopt the Roman alphabet in the next edition of my *Dictionary*.

The statement may sound strange that it takes longer to read and catch the substance of a Tamil paragraph than one in English, but it is true. The reason is chiefly, if not wholly, the absence of capitals. A Tamil paragraph looks like one long sentence from beginning to end. The eye does not catch proper names as quickly as in a paragraph of Roman characters. Perhaps some ingenious printer may invent capitals for the Tamil characters ; but such an attempt, if at all successful, would only make “confusion worse confounded” by increasing

the present number of characters to more than 500. If the Roman alphabet is adopted, there will be no difficulty as regards the initial consonants, none of which require dotting. A Tamil paragraph will also look more attractive and variegated than at present.

Tamil is a phonetic language. As regards its vowels, it has even musical accuracy. To foreigners who seldom get over the difficulty of confounding short and long vowels whose 'time' is measured, and the insertion and omission of consonant sounds, the simple Roman characters that are now proposed would prove far more suitable and unerring symbols than the present cumbersome characters. *Manam*, the mind, for example, is neither *manam* (மனம்), nor *mañnam* (மண்ப்பம்), nor *mannam* (மண்ப்பம்), nor again *mānam* மனம்; the characters are the same, but the dotting unmistakably identifies the right word, and fixes the exact length of the vowel—at a much quicker glance to the eye than the symbols now employed. The Tamil child, in such a case, is no better off than the foreigner.

To the printer, the introduction of Roman type would make a most welcome relief. The present huge and complicated *Tamil* case would all be done away with. The compositor would sit at the English case and readily pick up his types. He would, of course, soon get used to the few dotted ones. Composing would proceed much faster. There need be no limit to the number and size of editions of the most popular Tamil works. *Brevier* is the smallest type now used and this is the sole property of one Press. With the Roman characters on the other hand, even smaller types could be advantageously made use of for smaller editions of the larger books. The impetus the change would impart to printing operations would be something stupendous.

The consequent reduction in cost would greatly encourage both author and publisher. After careful consideration, I think the gain would be about fifty per cent. on the production of a book. Having very few publishers at present who are willing



to accept manuscripts for publication at their own risk, as is the case so largely in the West, writers hesitate to publish their own works. The reduction in the cost would encourage at least some of them, and even the one or two publishers in this matter ; and what is better still, Tamil books might hereafter be printed in England, just as if they were ordinary English books.

The proposed reform should begin with Tamil but by no means end with it. As in Europe, so in India, all its one hundred languages should possess but one alphabet. Formerly different European languages had different alphabets. The old Gothic or black-letter character was widely used in Europe at one time. In England it is now used only in ornamental titles and sign boards. I remember English books printed in these characters, some fifty years ago, with capitals for every noun. When I began the study of Danish, I had to struggle much to master the Norse alphabet, which resembled Egyptian hieroglyphics rather than clear characters ; but now I read Danish in Roman characters. Everything has changed in Europe. Why should we not strive for a similar salutary reform in the alphabets of India, and make a start with Tamil ? Reformers are already talking about one common language for India. I think a common alphabet is even an earlier and more urgent need for bringing the people together. While travelling through Europe, though a stranger to Italian, French and German, the sameness of the alphabet proved most helpful to me in trying to identify places and streets. I believe that in North India, Hindi and Urdu books are already being printed in Roman characters.

After all the Roman alphabet is a distant relation of the Tamil, or rather the characters of both have been gradually developed from one original ancestor. In all alphabets, *a* is invariably the first letter or character. Canon Taylor in his genealogical tree of the letter *m* in his scientific work on the alphabets of the world, has ingeniously traced the relationship

of this letter to the Tamil *m*. The fact that all Europe has adopted the Roman alphabet for its languages, though these differ in various ways, demonstrates its simplicity and suitability to express the varying sounds of a host of languages.

There are also certain defects in the Tamil alphabet which render necessary the adoption of a simpler and more suitable alphabet like the Roman. Long *u* is represented by two different letters written one on the top of the other, thus ~~au~~—a great puzzle to children as well as thoughtful learners. Similarly, *au* = ~~au~~. Consonants are not uniformly animated. *Ko* is ~~ko~~, but *no* is ~~no~~, three symbols for one and only two for the other. Again, *kai* is ~~kai~~, but *lai* is ~~lai~~, only one character for the latter. In Tamil every consonant is dotted, which means eighteen dots in all. But by adopting the Roman consonants, we get rid of most, dotting only those which require to be distinguished from others of a similar sound. The great Jesuit poet, Beschi, introduced a few improvements which have all been adopted. The sign for the long vowel and the letter *r* (r) are apt to be confounded. I claim no originality for the proposal. It was already put forward many years ago by Dr. Pope, and latterly by others—but this is the first time, I believe, a paper has been written urging reasons for the reform.

It has been urged against this proposal that in case a new alphabet is adopted, the present characters will be lost or forgotten, and there will be no one to decipher ancient inscriptions. There is no more fear of such a thing taking place than that the old English alphabet, or for that matter, any other ancient alphabet will be lost, so long as there are scholars interested in the study of ancient languages. Others may fear that the English sounds will be confounded with Tamil. Of this there is even less danger. Just as Englishmen learn the powers of the French letters, in spite of the sameness of the alphabet, so will children and foreigners be taught the precise sounds and other peculiarities, if any, of the Tamil letters.

But the greatest opposition I fear will be the novelty

of the proposal. To learn Tamil by means of English letters ! Preposterous ! would be the exclamation of most conservative men. The only way to meet this natural opposition would be to popularize the reform by actually publishing books, both large and small, in the new alphabet. There would then be some tangible proof of the simplicity, cheapness and other advantages of the new movement in Tamil literature. The University may say, "Tamil in Roman character only," as they now add a footnote to Sanskrit text-books "In the Devanagari character," and thus assist in the work of superseding the cumbrous old Tamil alphabet. Or the Government may authorize the Director of Public Instruction to issue a general order to all managers of schools that in future only Tamil books in the Roman alphabet should be used by pupils. The reform, however, will come sooner or later. But whether it comes quickly by a stroke of the pen, or only after a long time, after patient, persistent effort, the new alphabet will prove an immense boon to the child and the foreigner, the writer and reader, the printer and publisher, the author and poet, the typist and short-hand writer—in fact, to every one who has the misfortune to use this ancient, rich and refined tongue by means of two hundred and forty-seven symbols—an alphabet quite out of harmony with the exigencies of the age.

## SECTION II.

# THE INDIAN CHURCH.

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### 1.—A UNITED TAMIL CHURCH FOR MADRAS (1887).

In venturing to introduce the somewhat novel subject of a United Tamil Church for Madras for discussion this evening, I shall consider it briefly under the following heads: 1st, Is a United Tamil Church desirable in Madras? 2nd, Is it possible? 3rd, Is it probable? And lastly, How is the Conference to view the subject?

First, then, Is a United Tamil Church desirable in Madras? I think it hardly necessary for me to answer this question with a decided 'yes'; for I feel sure that almost all in this assembly will readily echo this sentiment. There are several reasons which seem to me to make such a church highly desirable. Sects of European origin are becoming distasteful to thoughtful Indian Christians. In England, that great nation of 325 sects, they may be trees and shrubs of a natural growth. Here, however, they can only be foreign plants tenderly cared for, and nurtured in hot-houses. Alien forms of Christian theology can no more take root among Tamil Christians than the oak and the beech can thrive and mature on a tropical soil. "Indian Christianity," says the Bishop of Durham, "can never be cast in an English mould." Educated Tamil Christians are beginning to think. They compare sect with sect, and creed with creed; and find that Christians for the most part, whether in India or elsewhere, belong to one sect rather than another far more by the accident of birth and early training than by their own deliberate choice. They are thus getting tired of the present state of things and begin to long for a United Church.

On the other hand, ignorant and thoughtless members of the community are catching the contagion of the sectarian spirit of Europe. They look down with contempt upon all other sects except their own and as a natural result, an unhealthy *esprit de corps* is formed and cherished, while the gulf between sect and sect becomes wider and deeper day by day. Sects make castes of Christians, and bigoted castes of clergymen. My good old father once remarked to me in all seriousness, "I doubt very much if Church of England people will ever go to heaven." On the contrary, pulpits are now-a-days made use of for utterances like the following: I sought for my Beloved in the streets and broadways, but, found Him not, *i. e.*, Christ can only be found in the Church of England, the Mother Church, and not in the other Churches, which are all classed under the worthy designation of "streets and broadways." Thus matters are coming to a crisis in Madras and the outlook is decidedly gloomy.

As regards outsiders, the various divisions of the Protestant Church do by no means present a very inviting spectacle. In England and America, where the divisions are all within the pale of the Church, it is quite a different thing. But in India we are a small body surrounded by a people of a hostile faith, who watch our conduct with a keen scrutinizing eye. Is it not highly desirable that Tamil Christians should present a firm and united front to those to whom they desire to carry the Gospel of peace. An intelligent man on hearing his daughter was about to be baptized, taunted her with the following questions: What sect are you going to join? Have you studied and compared their various doctrines? How are you going to be baptized, by being immersed or sprinkled upon? And what do you think of Baptism? Is it a mere ceremony or something more? and so on. I may as well add that this man was once himself a candidate for baptism by the L. M. S. Missionaries, but his little faith was staggered by the twenty volumes a Baptist Minister had kindly given him to read on the subject of

**Baptism.** It is indeed easy for us to say that the man's faith was not genuine, but it must, nevertheless, be admitted that the spirit of disunion in the Christian camp is a great stumbling-block in the way of Hindu enquirers.

Moreover, encouraged by our sectarian divisions, Hindu reformers have begun to put forward a new argument against the aggressive character of Christianity. They say that there is but one universal religion in the world, and that Christianity, Hinduism, Mahomedanism and other faiths are but different sects of it, in the same way as Methodism, Calvinism, &c., are different sub-sects of the sect called Christianity and that therefore they should be allowed to adhere to their respective sects as tenaciously as Anglicans, Lutherans and the others adhere to theirs.

A United Church is also highly desirable as being conducive to the formation of a purely Tamil view of Christian teaching. As a rule, the most intelligent portion of our community are Mission Agents who are already burdened with the fetters of their respective creeds in which they should live, move and have their theological being. In an independent United Church ample scope would be given to all to interpret the Word of God in agreement with the light and learning they possess. The Sixty-six Vedas of the Christian religion are entirely of Eastern origin, and an Eastern Church, independent of Western control, ought to be able to expound them with ability and accuracy.

As an easy and practical solution of the problem of self-support, a United Church is highly desirable. One good congregation in each district of Madras, perhaps two in the Town, could far more easily maintain a pastor of its own, than half-a-dozen in the same district, most of them with only a handful of independent members.

Now, as regards the second question as to whether such a union is possible, I should say it is. The reason commonly urged against a United Indian Church, that it would either add

a new sect to the already numerous divisions in the Church, or identify itself with one or more of them, does not appear to me to have any weight at all. As well might the study of mental science by Hindu students be discontinued, because there is some danger of their joining the school of Bain or Spencer. No, it need not do so. And even granting that it would do so, that is no reason why the Tamil Christians of Madras should not be encouraged to combine themselves into one united Church. With the Word of God in their hands and the Holy Spirit in their hearts, they should lack nothing else to keep them in the faith. Primitive Christians had not even so much as the whole New Testament for a long time. And what is better still, they knew nothing of the elaborate confessions and creeds of modern Christendom.

Faith in Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Son of God and the Saviour of men from both the guilt and power of sin, and the acceptance of the Bible as the inspired record of God's dealings with the race and the infallible guide of our faith and practice—should amply suffice to form an objective as well as subjective basis of union for all Tamil Christians. If, however, a creed is necessary for practical purposes, such as adult-baptism, ordination, &c.,—something that should express in a simple, succinct form the great facts of Christianity, there is the Apostles' Creed which is believed to be older than even the New Testament. It was Luther, I think, who said that even a thousand divines could not have drawn it up. This creed ought to be the Magna Charta of all Tamil Christians, of all Christians in the world, and form the sole basis of their (ecclesiastical) union. Some say it is too broad, but the broader the better. This view of the Apostles' Creed becoming the basis of union for all churches may be considered Utopian; still, it is a fact gradually gaining ground. I was greatly delighted to find that the writer of an able article on "Modern Missions" in the July No. of the *Quarterly Review* expressed similar sentiments with regard to a United Church. The attempt, to say the least, is worth

a trial. Minor details as to church government would be settled by the church itself. An excellent form of government would be a combination of the Episcopal and Presbyterian elements, or in political language, of both monarchical and republican principles, of which we have the best type in the British constitution. As regards private interpretation, it must be allowed the fullest liberty, provided it never contravenes the clauses and spirit of the church's Magna Charta. For instance, a member may desire to put off his child's baptism till it is old enough to judge for itself; another may prefer immersion to sprinkling; a third may hold very high views of the sacraments, a fourth may be sceptical as to the genuineness of John's third Epistle and so on. All such opinions must be respected and treated with charity by those members who hold other views.

But thirdly, Is a United Church probable? This question cannot be disposed of as easily as the two former ones. The effort to form this union should, of course, originate with the Tamil Christians. When I take a calm view of the present condition of my community, its general lethargy and lack of life, its want of men of 'light and leading', its unconsciousness of its peculiar call and claims, its proneness to adopt Sectarian prejudices as they come ready cut and dry from European markets, the apathy of its most well-to-do members as regards its spiritual as well as material welfare, the absence of anything like unity and public-spiritedness among its members, and the fact that the churches for the greater part still consist of Mission Agents and Boarding schools, make me think that the full time has not yet arrived for the wheel to be set in motion. Still, indications there are which point to a not distant future when a United Tamil Church will be reckoned among the new things of the 20th Century in Madras. Dr. Cornish has been pleased to call us an enterprising and progressive community. Christian candidates at the Universities are beginning to secure a higher percentage of passes than Hindus, including even Brahmins. The rate of increase of our population is the greatest for all India. There are at present



in Madras as many as 40 Tamil Christian graduates. Here and there, one may see signs of a higher life and greater energy. Promising young graduates begin to think less of money-making and more of winning souls for Christ. All these signs lead one to cherish the hope that the time will soon come when not a few earnest and godly representatives of the community will have the courage to cast off their sectarian shackles and unite in one common brotherhood to maintain the ordinances of the Gospel among themselves. Or, it may be a single high-souled Tamil Christian, "full of faith and the Holy Ghost", with good gifts and great grace, who may rise and rouse the churches of Madras in such a manner, that they shall begin to live as they never before did and ere long form themselves into one united church. This is the only way in which it seems to me a living Tamil Church can be brought into existence.

Lastly, in what light is the Conference to view the possible formation of a United Tamil Church in this city. The question, certainly, is a delicate one, but none the less important. Sustaining the relation of a parent to children, the Conference cannot but rejoice at the thought that its hitherto slumbering son is about to stand on his own legs and begins to think and act for himself. The son, just blooming into manhood longs for liberty; and though some of his opinions and ways of action may seem strange and erroneous, still a wise and loving parent will only help him on and not thwart him in his efforts to realize his natural and lawful cravings.

It is therefore with some confidence that I beg to propose the following measures which, if adopted by the Conference, will not only prepare the way for the speedy accomplishment of so desirable an object as a United Tamil Church, but also lay the Tamil Christians under lasting obligations to this great Missionary body.

The first measure I would propose is the inauguration of a Native Christian Conference. In connection with this pro-

posal, I make a special and earnest appeal to my Tamil brethren. Such a Conference is a great *desideratum* in Madras. More than a year ago I addressed the oldest Tamil Minister in Madras on the subject and laid before him a rough scheme for such an Association. Nothing, however, has resulted from this attempt. The proposed Conference should be organised and conducted on nearly the same lines as the Missionary Conference. But it should be quite representative. The Tamil clergy and all prominent laymen of Madras being members of it. European Christians should be always welcome as visitors. The two Conferences may meet together once or twice a year for the purpose of mutual edification, social intercourse, and friendly discussion of subjects affecting the welfare of Christian Missions.

The advantages of the kind of Conference I plead for, will be neither few nor futile. It will bring about a far better state of things than exists at present among the various sections of the Tamil Christian community. The leading members will be drawn closer together, and a more friendly feeling and sympathy will be roused and kept up; sectarian bias will give place to broader views and higher aspirations. Opportunities for meeting one another and forming fresh acquaintances will be presented at every monthly meeting, rendering unnecessary, to a great extent, calls which it is so difficult to make and return in a large and scattered city like Madras. Such a Conference will also serve as an excellent place for the reception of strangers hailing from other parts of the country or from foreign lands. It will, moreover, be gladly resorted to by European Missionaries, who seldom feel inclined to call on their dusky brethren in a free and social manner. The community will gain a status among the Hindus and in the eyes of Government. The Conference will also help in the creation of public opinion; public spirit will be fostered; and to outsiders will be afforded a safe index as to the pulse of the Tamil Christian community. United

action will be easily secured, whenever such action is necessary either to address Government or some other body on any important topics or to arrange for large gatherings, such as the proposed Tamil Congress. In short, the organisation of this Conference will be the first stone laid in the temple of the United Tamil Church.

I may be blamed for dwelling so much on the proposed Native Christian Conference, an Institution which, properly speaking, ought to emanate from the Tamil brethren. Still, I feel that in an important matter like this, co-operation of our European brethren is highly necessary. Even those who cannot approve of a United Tamil Church may promote the formation of a Conference in various ways.

Another way in which the Conference may help bringing about the existence of a United Tamil Church is by encouraging as much as possible the exchange of pulpits and United Communion Services between members of different denominations. The pulpit and the altar—these are the two poles on which the axis of Sectarianism rotates. There seems to be no reason why two ministers who represent two different sects should not occasionally occupy one another's pulpits. But little caution is needed to avoid treading on debatable ground, especially when it is remembered that the *terra firma* common to both is so wide and spacious. Bishop Gell has sometimes preached in Congregational churches and I am told that ministers of the English and Scotch establishments often officiate for one another. Our differences as to doctrine and government, Hindus are hardly aware of; but the rigid exclusiveness of some of the Christian pulpits seldom escapes their notice and censure. They ask, if we belong to different religions?

We do indeed talk of agreeing in essentials and disagreeing in non-essentials, but in actual practice it is invariably the non-essentials that regulate our ecclesiastical dealings with one another. The only question that decides the propriety of

communion and fellowship between believer and believer is not faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but faith in mortal men like Luther and Calvin, Arminius, Wesley and Pusey—Protestant Popes to whose infallibility Tamil Christians have to subscribe.

A bond of union may also be effected by getting *all* Tamil Christians to commune together at stated periods, the clergy setting the example. Already certain clergymen are nobly coming forward to sit with so-called dissenters at the same communion table. Oh, what a happy thing would it be if all Tamil Christians could be brought together to remember their Saviour's dying love and commune with His body and blood. I fear it is not so much the authorities of a sect or society or even the people who belong thereto, as *individual* clergymen who stand in the way of the Lord's people fulfilling in the best way they can His last prayer that "they all may be one."

With a view to the desirable union of Tamil Churches in Madras, I would beg of Missionaries not to insist on their employes whether male or female, becoming members of their employers' churches. Of course to care for their spiritual interests is laudable, but this can be effected by other means. Church expansion by proselytism cannot be a healthy growth. The cultivation of the very *esprit de corps* that Mr. Rae urged on us in his instructive paper last month, I should on this ground see discouraged as much as possible. Let us rather cultivate a broader *esprit de corps*, viz.: "The communion of saints."

One more proposal and I have done. In making it, I fully trust that something more than the mere romantic nature of the proposal will commend it to the consideration of this Conference. The proposal is that this Conference makes a united appeal to the various Societies it represents to permit it to place the conditions of ordination on one common basis for all Tamil candidates. I beg to be excused the apparent audacity of this proposal, but I am strongly convinced that the Conference, if it perseveres in so good a cause, will triumph

at last. When Missionaries leave the shores of England and other foreign lands, let them leave behind, along with their heavy woollen clothing, all sectarian adhesions and encumbrances, as being utterly unsuited to a foreign climate. Let them ask their societies, in the words of the large-hearted writer in the Review quoted above to "rise above their sectarian prepossessions and shew themselves less eager to perpetuate their own peculiarities than to leave behind them in the fields of their labour a Christianity broad and free enough to unite their converts in a common brotherhood." Subscription to the Apostles' Creed as the embodiment of the cardinal facts contained in the Word of God and a promise to faithfully administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as instituted by our Lord, ought to be a sufficient guarantee for the orthodoxy of those who seek ordination. More than this need not be demanded in the special Department. The cultivation of the science of Theology, especially that of speculative theories regarding perfection and predestination, conditional immortality and universal redemption, and such other nice and knotty points as *Logos phrophoricos*, and *homoioussion*, *Sublapsarian* and *Supralapsarian* may be safely left in the hands of those who have time and talent for such profound pursuits. Pray let me not be misunderstood. I do not for one moment say that special views and teachings should be abandoned. No, they are too dear to be given up. Men will continue to think and theorize as long as the world lasts. Even tastes may differ as to form, ritual and service. All I plead for is that we do not convert our peculiarities into impassable barriers. Mr. Cobban would have us build our churches after the Aryan fashion, but I hope he will have the courage as well as kindness to counsel his followers to steer clear of anything that savours of sectarian dogma and rear their spiritual edifice on purely Tamil conceptions of the "Truth as it is in Jesus."

Madras, benighted Madras, has taken the lead in many

important matters. It has been in the van of many a great and useful reform. May it not be said in years to come that the Missionary Conference of this city was the first to take steps to help forward the building up of a United Tamil Church in Madras.

'Is there any fastening that can shut in love,' asks a heathen Tamil bard, and what is this but the faint echo of a Christian Apostle's deeper sentiments "Though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity I am *nothing*."

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## 2.—THE NATIVE MINISTRY.\*

I am one of those unfortunates whose subject has been changed by the Committee. I was first asked to speak on the Work among Educated Indians—a work to which I have devoted a great portion of my time during the last twelve years. But a few days before the date of the Conference I was requested to address you on the Training and Position of the Native Ministry. Before proceeding with the subject I desire to make a remark or two. The papers in your hands by Dr. Hooper and Mr. Jones are so full and exhaustive that they can only be the results of a long, rich, and ripe experience in the work of training candidates for the Ministry. I have myself read them with much profit and pleasure. Any remarks, therefore, that I shall make now are not to be taken as an exhaustive address on the subject in hand. That is not necessary. My intention is simply to say something additional or supplementary to the contents of the valuable papers before us. I shall not take up your time in dwelling upon the selection of candidates, their spiritual qualifications, their general course

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\* An address delivered before the Dec. Conference, Bombay, 1892.

of theological instruction and other similar topics on which we are all more or less agreed. And, secondly, if in anything that I advocate or urge in connection with the important subject before us my statements should appear to be too radical or calculated to hurt the feelings of my Western brethren, I request you to remember that I have myself no grievances or complaints to lay before you. I belong to a society which with one or two others makes no difference whatever between its own Agents and those of purely Indian origin. If I plead, therefore, for greater privileges and rights for the Native Ministry, I plead not my own case, but that of my brethren.

Mr. Jones' paper is both conservative and liberal. I am not sure if Mr. Jones has had charge of a theological Seminary, but a careful perusal of his exhaustive paper will show that he is at great pains to adjust the balance between a conservative and a liberal view of the subject. His references to "ordained evangelists" (not pastors), "men of superior culture and training," "District Superintendents" and the like, prove clearly that he is moving with the times, while at the same time he advocates the continuance of the usual cheap and inferior pastorate. Dr. Hooper advocates training in the English language wherever possible, and on the delicate point—that of position—he is very explicit. For he lays down that "amongst ministers of the one Word of the common salvation, race goes for nothing at all, but honour and rank and dignity depend solely on age, and experience and education, and usefulness." To me such statements are particularly encouraging, as pointing to a new epoch in the history and development of the Native Ministry.

The training of the Ministry, then, must be a distinct and essential branch of every mission—to which experts must be appointed to devote their whole time and energy as in other departments. I fear very much that this is not the case in some missions. Men with too many irons in the fire are often forced as it were to take charge of the training of students.

It was just the case with me. The training I received was anything but sufficient. But this was not owing to lack of qualifications—but rather due to the difficult circumstances under which my professors were placed. If possible, superior pastors must be imported from England or America for short periods, so that students might profit by their special pastoral and preaching qualifications. I am afraid a missionary is not just the man to be placed in charge of a divinity class. He has generally too much to occupy his attention, while by long residence in India he gets rather out of touch with the fresh and vigorous pastoral life of Christendom. Specialists are the order of the day.

I think there ought to be three grades of ordained Indians, namely, rural pastors, ordained evangelists, and missionaries. I propose this after a careful study of the question during many years. For village congregations, such as are being gathered from the lower and depressed classes, vernacular men, with a year's training, chiefly in the Scriptures and the art of ruling with holy skill, the rural congregations out of which they themselves have sprung, must be appointed pastors over one or more churches as the case may be. In their case, self-support would obtain a natural and easy solution. As Bishop Thoburn remarked yesterday, the needs of such men being very few and simple, the churches would support them without feeling the burden—of course support would come rather in kind than coin—but this is a mere matter of detail. For Mofussil towns, however, I should plead for a higher grade of pastors—who should be at least of the Matriculation standard. Their training should be in both Vernacular and English, and should last at least three years. They might work in such towns as Evangelists under the direction of the District or senior Missionary and at the same time have pastoral charge of the congregation, from which a portion of their salary ought to be drawn. Vigorous evangelistic work could be carried on in the mornings and evenings of most weekdays. While midday hours and



Saturdays could be spent in study and preparation for the pulpit. Such an evangelist with the interests of his pastorate at heart would make an excellent church, and achieve much success in his efforts towards self-support, while every year would see a few converts added to the congregation over which he presides as pastor. Such a man should be ordained soon after leaving his divinity class. His apprenticeship should be served *before* and not *after* his studentship. To ordain a man when he ought to be pensioned is a mischievous practice, and ought to be gradually given up. At the same time, holding out the prospect of ordination as a promotion is demoralizing to the evangelist, who is then led to keep promotion as his goal, and not the reward or the recompense from his Master and Captain.

I now come to the last class of Native agents. They must be drawn from among the graduates of our Universities. These are the agents we require for the cities and larger towns of this country. These men also should have served a voluntary apprenticeship before they are accepted as candidates for the ministry. There are many ways in which a graduate's fitness for the ministry may be ascertained. His burning love for souls, his enthusiasm for the Master's cause, his gifts of speech and pen, his winning manners and consecrated life—these natural and spiritual qualifications must assert themselves before he could ever be thought of as a likely candidate for the ministry. Such a man should receive a first class training—a training that should be exactly the same as to *standard*, though certainly not as to *kind*, as that given to graduates in Christian countries while under preparation for the ministry. The training should extend over four years, and must be in the hands of experts brought out from Home for the special purpose. On leaving College they must be ordained and appointed to work as Missionaries. There is a general unwillingness to designate Native agents by this name. Government makes no distinctions. If a Native is employed as a Collector, no

new designation is invented for him, simply because he is not a European; he is called a Collector—not even a *native* Collector. Though I am proud of the name Native Christian, and would prefer being thus termed till I die, I do not like the adjective *native* being prefixed to every employment in mission service. We are constantly referred to *native* pastors, *native* missionaries, *native* teachers, and so on. Except for the purpose of census returns, I think the epithet *native* had better be omitted in missionary lists and reports. As in a professedly non-religious Government, so much more in the church of Christ, there should be “neither Greek nor Jew, bond nor free, circumcision nor uncircumcision.”

This naturally brings me to deal with the very delicate and difficult question of salary. But before dwelling on it let me dispose of the question of position. In this matter I am not quite so advanced as Dr. Johnson, who urged the other day—and I admire greatly his liberality of view—that Indian pastors should have their voice and vote in the disposal and managements of funds received from Europe and America. I do not think the time has yet come for a general acceptance of this policy. But so far as Indian missionaries are concerned—the kind of cultured and well trained men I plead for—there should be no difficulty. It is feared that Christians who subscribe for missions would rather like their funds to be managed by their own agents. But I am afraid this is merely a fanciful objection. If the proposal were put to them, I am sure they would rejoice—rather than regret—to have the advice and co-operation of qualified Indians in the matter of spending their funds for the benefit of Indians. To come back to the salary question. In trying to solve this problem, while I fully agree with the view usually held that the salaries of pastors must be strictly in proportion to the financial capacity of the churches—both at present and in the near future—I must at the same time draw your attention to one great factor, which is at work and which accounts for the difficulties experienced

on the one hand—and the discontent endured on the other—in the matter of salaries for ordained native agents. I mean civilization. India, as you know, is in transition. Everything and everybody is undergoing a great civilizing change. You see it especially in the large towns and cities. You yourselves are the cause of it. It reminds me of the days when the presence of the Norman in England exerted among other things, a great civilising influence on the down-trodden Saxon—which continued for well-nigh two centuries and a half, until in the reign of King John the two races became welded together into one English nation. And now your civilization has become stereotyped, except in some trifling details. There is hardly any difference between a German, and an Englishman; but our civilization has just begun. We Indians, then, are now passing through a similar change. We are unconsciously yielding ourselves to your civilizing influence. We are not to blame for this. In this respect every man is a slave. He cannot escape it. But for you I should not have worn this black coat. I say then that owing to this civilizing process, we meet with ordained Indian agents in every degree of civilization. Those who live in far-off villages seldom or never come under this spell, and to them I should say Rs. 15 is far too much. On the other hand, the cultured and civilized missionary in the city needs much more to live on and keep himself in touch with the educated classes of his day and generation. Mr. Goldsmith has referred us to a Government official who has stated that a native gentleman can live comfortably on a fifth of a European's salary. Mr. Goldsmith is well-known as a liberal man, and he is not responsible for this view of the case. On the other hand, Government itself has ruled, as regards Statutory Civilians, that they should receive two-thirds of the European pay. I think that is about the fair proportion that ought to exist between the two classes of agents, provided of course, that there is the same education and refinement and training.

Our policy, must, therefore, be one that would attract—not by pay and position merely—but rather by love and sympathy—the cultured Christians of the land. There is no difficulty, whatever, in providing pastors for rural congregations. It is in the matter of raising a high-toned and educated Native Ministry that the greatest difficulty is felt. Some Missions do not attempt it at all; while others do not seem to wish it at all; but the great need of India is a cultured and consecrated pastorate. We want men for our Colleges, we want men for the educated classes, we want men for our city churches, where the educated element is steadily on the increase, we want men for missionary work, and unless we extend to our graduates the right-hand of fellowship, and accept them as brethren *bona fide* in the Master's work, sharing with us the same privileges and responsibilities, we must remain content with the present inferior sort of pastorate, whose tone is confessedly low and whose influence is confined within the narrow horizon of a village church. If, therefore, the Native Church is to take her proper position in the Indian Continent, if she is to create for herself the form best suited to her national genius and character and produce an Indian theology and an Indian hierarchy, if she is to guide the moral and spiritual destinies of this great land, if under the standard of her Lord she is to be the greatest force in the regeneration of India's millions, the Churches of Europe and America must take up the training of her ministry as a duty next in importance only to that of raising churches and congregations, and spend far greater energy and thought in the creation of a first-rate ministry which shall be both a boon and a blessing to the land.

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### 3.—INDIAN CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.\*

The following is the paper on the subject, by the Rev. J. Lazarus :—

It is extremely difficult to write on this interesting subject. The time allowed is only ten minutes. The available material is so very meagre and humble that it is scarcely necessary to introduce it for discussion. But even a negative quantity is not without its value. If the discussion eventually stirs up some of the younger and more vigorous minds in our community, the introduction of the subject, however barren and uninviting, will not have been in vain.

It must be remembered that our community is barely a century old, if we reckon from the date of the starting of English missions to the East. Although as a matter of fact, the community had its origin nearly a century earlier, a few converts of that period could not be called a community. The Roman Catholic community is certainly four centuries old and ought in the matter of indigenous literature, to lay claim to a fair share of original thought and intellectual life. But it is not always age that leads. It is rather the abundance of life, manifesting itself in liberty of thought and speech. The withholding of the Word of God from the Indian members of the Papal communion and the consequent denial of private judgment has tended, in a large measure, to paralyse thought and literary activity. There is hardly a single prominent author among our Catholic brethren. Any little culture that the Indian mind is capable of has been left to the younger sister, but our community is not merely young. It suffers from the great disadvantage of inherited mental sluggishness. The converts being for the most part drawn from the lowest strata of Hindu Society, in which, owing to the force of circumstances, the carnal is attended to the entire neglect of the mind, the aptitude for anything like literary effort is de-

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\* Read before a Conference of Native Christians.

plorably small. I am not here speaking of geniuses, whose birth is not thus circumscribed, but of average authors, such as are common among the various nations of the world.

Nor have there been any special calls for a vigorous activity of the pen during the century which is fast drawing to its close. The monotony of Indian Christian life under missionary control and guidance has all but stereotyped it. The martyrdoms and persecutions, the fierce intellectual fights and attacks of the church's early centuries, have by no means characterized the first century of the Indian church. It is great events that give birth to great writers, and to these she has been a perfect stranger. The circumstances which roused and sustained the incessant activity of men like Ireneus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Origen, and quickened their thought and fired their eloquence, have been rather unfortunately than fortunately absent in this land of lifeless lethargy.

With such unfavourable circumstances, therefore, to contend against, it cannot be expected that our small community, numbering barely a million souls, could exert itself with anything like success in the world of letters. Let us however thank God and take courage that after all there has been some slight attempt at authorship among Native Christians. Compared with the literature of other communities, and viewed from various standpoints, Indian Christian Literature may be likened to a somewhat low range of scattered hills covered with much that is useless brushwood and hardly distinguishable from the surrounding landscape, but redeemed by a few summits that soar above the range and secure it a name among the mountains of the world.

Taking authorship in its widest and most popular application, I must say that Indian Christians have been rather prolific in the art of book-making. For to continue the figure, the range itself consists of translations, compilations, essays, guides, descriptions, narratives, and elementary school books. In this respect Native Christian writers are merely keeping

pace with their Hindu brethren. No doubt authorship of this sort does serve its day and generation and helps in the diffusion of general knowledge. But this is not the kind of effort that is expected to form the character, enrich the thought of the community, raise it in the scale of nations, contribute to the sum total of the world's knowledge, interpret mind and nature to each other, appeal with fresh force to the heart and conscience and lead men to seek nobler aims and happier lives. Tested by some such standard as this, we must admit that our literary range is very low indeed and that the summits are few and far between. Still, the range is not without its peaks. In the various fields of philosophic research, poetry, fiction, and general literature, Native Christian authors have distinguished themselves and perpetuated their names in their works.

Towering over all stands the venerable Krishna Mohan Bannerjea, the ripe Sanscrit scholar and author of, among other works, the famous "Aryan Witness," and the first Indian on whom the Calcutta University conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws. He has left his mark on the religious progress of India, while his works are studied by all who care to understand the relation between Christianity and Hinduism in their metaphysical aspects. Following him at a great distance with a far less gifted mind rises the slender figure of the late Ramachandra Bose, the well-known lecturer and author. His grasp of his subject, his mastery of the English language, and the majesty of his style have rendered his volumes extremely popular. I am always delighted to read his round, sonorous periods. Another remarkable figure in the range is the late Nehemiah Goreh, the hermit-philosopher, whom Professor Max Muller describes as one of the keenest intellects of India, and whose writings were more than a match for the subtle reasonings of the Pandits. A passing reference must also be made to Michael Dutt, the lyric poet of Bengal. Occupying a summit of his own sits the late Rev. Lal Behari Dey, who was celebrated for his English "pure and undefiled."

His *Govinda Samanta* alone could immortalize his name as an original pleasing novelist. His name is well-known in Europe. In this group of men there appears a tiny little woman, Toru Dutt, the sweet singer of Bengal. She awoke, as it were from a dream, sang a while and then slept again. Her poetry is said to be of very high merit, and has been translated into French. Professor Ramachandra of Lahore excelled in the sphere of mathematics and is even credited with certain discoveries in that region.

Tracing the range towards the west, we must pause a while among the Maharatta hills and gaze a little on a lonely summit there,—the authoress of *Saguna* and *Kamala*. It is a pity that Madras cannot claim the late Mrs. Sathianadhan as her own. Like an unexpected comet she shone for a short time, delivered her message and disappeared. *Saguna* and *Kamala* will ever remain a precious legacy of the authoress to her countrywomen. They have even travelled beyond this land. Native Christians must be proud to think that a member of their community is admired in different countries of Europe.

But it is a strange irony of the times—at least only so far as India is concerned—that all these authors without a single exception wrote in English and not in their Vernaculars, and consequently made their voices heard by only a very small fraction of their country-men. Stranger still, we speak to each other in a foreign tongue. The question as to whether English or the Vernacular will survive in India is a serious one and I for one earnestly trust that both will flourish side by side for centuries to come. The masses will never die out, although the number of English-speaking Indians may steadily increase. If, therefore, the masses are to be influenced at all (and they form the great bulk of the population), the authors must deliver their message through the Vernaculars. This applies alike to our own community. I am not aware what efforts have been made for the production and encouragement of original works in the Vernaculars in our Sister Provinces.



In Madras, that is to say, in South India, there have been a few original authors. The late Rev. V. Sandhosham wrote a little book on the "Christian's Victory over Death." I heard him preach it in three sermons. It is in the form of a dialogue between the Believer and Death, and has proved a most valuable aid to Tamil Christians. I need hardly add that this original little work possesses great vitality, and has already passed through many editions. Vedanayaga Sastri of Tanjore has earned an undying fame in the field of lyric poetry. There have been several successful composers since his time, but none of them come up to the cadence and rhythm as well as the spirit and style of his Tamil Hymns. He sang because he could not help it; and his works are rather voluminous. Some more are coming forward both among men and women. A similar place is held in Telugu, the Italian of South India, by the late Purushothamgaru whose lyrics are sung by old and young in the Telugu Christian community. Time fails me to dwell on local celebrities, such as Mr. Baba Padmanji, of Bombay, the author of some 96 publications, the late Rev. W. T. Saththianadhan whose chief work is the History of the Church and his good wife who wrote the "Good Mother," still a valuable and popular book, the late Mrs. Baboo, authoress of the "Queen," the anonymous author of Kasi Pandaram, a powerful and well-written dialogue between a Christian and a Sannyasi ending in the conversion of the latter, the late Daniel Pillai of last century, who, by devoting an hour daily to literary work for the Master succeeded in translating a number of valuable German works, and the late Rev. S. Winfred, the translator of Bunyan's Holy War and author of a projected epic on the History of David in a popular metre. Among living writers I must content myself with merely referring to one or two typical names, the Rev. Samuel Paul, Rao Sahib, who is said to have written more than a 100 books and tracts, and Mr. Krishna Pillai, of Palamcottah, the Christian pundit and poet, who with a laudable ambition has produced an epic based

on the Pilgrim's Progress in accordance with classic style and diction. I regret that I cannot refer to the other Vernaculars.

Would it not be well if our Association, or the proposed central body, could undertake to compile a more or less complete catalogue of Indian Christian Literature. It would be a most useful publication for reference and guidance, and enable one to gauge the literary activity of the small community scattered throughout the Indian continent, forming one more link in drawing the members into closer contact. On the whole I think we have reason to congratulate ourselves on the intellectual efforts of our community, that they have not been quite barren or powerless.

Now just a word in conclusion. Ours certainly is a small community. But our progress during the last decade has been remarkable. We have become conscious of our life as a peculiar people. That life is manifesting itself in the various Associations which have come into existence in India and Burmah, and the efforts they are putting forth for the welfare and progress of the entire body. We are proud of our authors. The mantles they have thrown are being picked up by younger men and women who wield both English and Vernacular pens. In Madras alone there are more than 300 Native Christian graduates. Throughout India there must be at least 400. This means a vast amount of potential energy for our community. My appeal, therefore, is to the younger men. You have a duty to discharge and a message to deliver. Your country awaits your service. You have at least 6 hours a day, which you can call absolutely your own. Daniel Pillai faithfully spent one of these precious hours in writing for his country-men. You may spend all the six, if you feel your responsibility for the right use of your leisure hours. What our Lord said about the abundance of the heart is no less true of the pen than the tongue. Literature is the collection of the best thoughts of a community. Fill your minds then with the best thoughts and the noblest aspirations. You will thus

begin to write from the abundance of your heart. You cannot all become summits in the range of Indian Christian literature. Yours may be a humble part to play in the intellectual history of your people. But remember, there can be no summits, without a range, however low. Choose your congenial sphere of literary activity, be it fiction or poetry, philosophy, or drama, lecture or tract; let it be according to the measure of your gifts and tastes. But be sure to bring to bear on your labour of love all the energy and zeal you can command. And if your effort is not crowned with success, you may at least rest contented that you have with your pen honestly endeavoured to serve your country and your God.

#### 4.—WHY DO NOT MORE INDIAN GRADUATES ENTER THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY?

I have been requested to write a short article on this subject. The question as worded above takes it for granted that too few graduates have entered the Christian Ministry. Is it really so? Let us examine the facts. The University of Madras was founded in 1857, and the first native graduated two years later. Since then about 230 Native Christians have graduated in the University. This figure represents the respectable proportion of about 10 per cent. to the total number of graduates. But of the 230 native Christian graduates only 10, or less than 5 per cent., have entered the Christian ministry. Strictly speaking, there are only three who are engaged in missionary work properly so called, the others being ordained teachers or professors in missionary colleges. About ten or twelve Native Christian graduates are annually added to the list of University *alumni*, and yet for many years not one has offered himself as a candidate for the ministry. The first Indian graduate was accepted as a missionary candidate just twenty-four years after the founding of the University. There are many societies which have not a single graduate among their native clergy.

It is therefore clear that Christian graduates are not entering the ministry; and every one interested in the welfare of the Native ministry is naturally led to ask, why native graduates are not doing so.

It does not require much thought to find out the reasons. They lie on the surface. First of all, there are no proper Theological Colleges. By "proper" I mean institutions which are fully and fairly equipped for the training of candidates for the Christian ministry,—institutions modelled and maintained more or less on the plan of our special colleges in Madras. There are in some missions schools or seminaries for the training of catechists and readers. To these, graduates are naturally unwilling to go. On the other hand, societies do not feel justified in opening high class Divinity Halls for the sake of one or two graduates who may desire to be educated for the ministry. Everything is subject to the law of supply and demand. Still, it is a serious question. Something must be done as a first step to induce Native Christian graduates to seek the ministry.

Something might be done by the devoted Principal of the Madras Christian College. A chair of general theology and church history might be added for the benefit of graduates and students in the junior and senior B.A. classes. Other chairs might be founded in course of time, and the way thus opened for a general Divinity College as an adjunct of the present Christian College. As it is, a graduate desirous of qualifying himself for Law, Medicine, Engineering, or Teaching, is far more fortunate than his brother who seeks the exalted calling of the Christian ministry.

Again, at the present time the Native ministry is not particularly attractive to Christian graduates. The general tone of the native clergy will have to be raised in every way, if the ministry is to become in India what it is in England and America—a noble and learned calling attracting to itself the learning and culture of the land. The native pastor's position differs little from that of a catechist, while his pay is proverbially

ally inadequate. He is invariably styled a *native* pastor with all the unpleasantness implied in the italicised word. He is nearly always ordained over a church from which he is expected to draw his support. As regards his children's education he is almost always in a state of chronic poverty. His relation to the European missionary is far from satisfactory. He was a catechist before, and he is constantly reminded that his ordination to the pastorate was a matter of favour. Outside the mission circle his general educational status prevents him from associating on equal terms with the native officials of his district. Now, a Christian graduate, who usually has a native pastor or catechist for his father or brother, is familiar with such a state of things, and naturally feels disinclined to place himself in a similar position, in spite of his longings for the ministry. Let these disabilities be removed, and I am sure more graduates would offer themselves for the Master's service.

Another reason, I think, is the hesitancy on the part of some to throw in their lot with a particular section of the church, albeit their own. It is well known that the human mind passes through several stages during its growth from childhood to maturity. At about 20 or 21 years of age—the average age at which a Native Christian graduates—the mind is in a stage of what might be called a reasoning scepticism. His four years of rather severe mental discipline have led him to think, and, consequently, he thinks, among other things, of the church to which he belongs in its relation to other churches; and although he was *born* into it, he now desires to *reason* himself into it. To him, however, the task opens up a vast field of probably fruitless toil, and he thus gives it up for the present and turns his attention to secular employment.

Not the least difficulty, however, is the matter of support during a theological training. The average graduate is poor, and he has already taxed his parents' purse too heavily to induce them to support him another three or four years at a Missionary college. It is partly, if not wholly, owing to this

circumstance that it has not yet occurred to candidates for the Christian ministry that parents should educate their sons for the church. While a student of divinity, I supported myself by teaching. But this is a bad system and should be discouraged as much as possible. All the time and energy of the young divinity student should be devoted to his training, whether practical or theoretical. The stipend allowed to catechist-pupils cannot meet the wants of cultured young men. At least Rs. 30 would be required for the adequate support (books included) of a graduate student, and if arrangements could be made for such scholarships, some might be encouraged to enter the Christian ministry. Some wealthy native Christian would honour himself greatly by endowing such a scholarship in his mission. Even well-to-do Native churches could put their surplus funds to no better use than providing the support of a young graduate while at a Divinity college.

There is also a great deal of uncertainty and lack of uniformity regarding the pay and position of ordained Indians. Each mission has its own rules, and even these are not invariably followed. In fact, a new rule is made in the case of every fresh candidate for ordination. As it is, salaries are so varied that they range from Rs. 100 to Rs. 5,000 per annum. I hear the S. P. G. has adopted a scale of salaries for graduates and undergraduates in orders. Why saddle a young and inexperienced graduate with the weighty responsibilities of a pastorate when he could be better employed as a missionary among the heathen? Ordain him as soon as he leaves college and give him a *taluk* or half a *taluk*, with perhaps a catechist or two, to preach the Gospel regularly within this sphere from one end of the year to the other. Even colleges and schools are excellent fields for the employment of young Native missionaries. At the present time a young graduate who seeks to enter the ministry has to contend not only against the difficulty of training himself thoroughly for the Master's service, but even against the mistiness which hangs over his future; no

one could tell him how much he is likely to get for his maintenance or what the nature of his work would be. Under such circumstances is it not very natural that the young man should take to other work? This is not the case with young candidates in Europe and America, whether graduates or not. A code of rules and bye-rules, affecting even trifling details, is placed in their hands for their future guidance as soon as they are accepted as missionary students. Could not a similar concession be made to Indian graduates?

Again, on the part of a few, a sense of awe at the grave responsibility of a minister's office acts as a deterrent to their entering the ministry. I know several such graduates who are doing excellent work as principals and teachers, but who, on being advised to seek ordination have repeatedly declined the honour. In plain English, there is no such thing as entering the ministry in this country. It is usually the faithful catechist who is, as it were, *rewarded* with ordination after an apprenticeship of two or three decades. But *this* is not entering the ministry. It is the serious-minded, intelligent graduate who thinks earnestly of devoting himself to the sacred calling. If graduates are to be encouraged to become clergymen, the idea of entertaining them as catechists must be given up. They must be allowed to enter the ministry by the same door as their fellow-graduates in Christian countries.

There is an opinion prevalent among Native Christians that missions are not particularly anxious to entertain graduates as candidates for the ministry. What foundation there is for such an opinion, I cannot say, but it is said that graduate candidates are generally discouraged; that they are regarded as conceited young men with big notions, that the *humble* catechist is a far more useful and agreeable *helper* to work with than the raw youth who cannot wield his own mother-tongue with power and effect; that he expects and demands more pay and greater privileges than the catechist who is his own flesh and blood; and that he is generally of a delicate physique, unaccustomed to,

and, therefore, unfitted for the arduous labours of an itinerating evangelist. Some or all of these defects do exist in graduates, who are, after all, inexperienced young men just fresh from college. Still, the impression must not be allowed to get abroad that on the part of missionaries there is a reluctance to throw open the doors of the ministry to promising young graduates. To the credit of the Danish mission it must be added that it was the first to ordain an Indian graduate in all India and appoint him to missionary work among Hindus.

To some who look at the paucity of the Christian graduates turned out annually (only about 10 or 12), these considerations would seem more or less a waste of time. Let events take their course, they may say. Let the dozen graduates take up whatever secular work suits them best. By patient labour and intelligent application let them rise and adorn the churches to which they belong and which are sadly in need of educated and enlightened laymen. True, an intelligent population like the Native Christian community of South India ought to produce many more graduates than the dozen per annum. Only about 95 Christian graduates have passed out of the Christian College since 1869, and by far the greater number of these belong to the Church of England. Some missions have not yet had a single graduate from their ranks. Special facilities must, therefore, be given to the promising sons of mission agents without reference to their future employment in the mission. It is sure to pay in the long run. An increasing number of graduates would strengthen the churches considerably on the one hand, while on the other, it would lead some to turn their attention to the Christian ministry. In any case, an educated man anointed with grace and power from heaven, whether in the ministry or outside of it, is a mighty power for good in the present condition of India.

It may be asked, "Why do graduates trouble themselves with difficulties of one kind and another, if they are really moved with a burning desire for the salvation of souls? Could



they not trust to Providence and leave the future in the hands of the Lord?" The question, to be sure, is a reasonable one, but it must be put to graduates in England as well. Native graduates, like all other graduates, are human beings with human wants and aspirations. Besides, the reasons adduced above affect the generality of graduates, not the rare man with great grace and good gifts, who is beyond all rules and systems, before the might of whose faith difficulties vanish and doubts are dispelled. It is, however, with ordinary persons that missionary societies have to deal, as a rule—persons with infirmities and passions like ourselves, who regulate their conduct mainly by the example they see in their superiors.

To conclude, graduates, especially those who have surrendered themselves wholly to the Lord, should remember that there is a special call to them from their Saviour to possess Canaan by conquest. In spite of the many disabilities and discouragements which crowd around the door of the Christian ministry, they must feel it their duty and their privilege to struggle manfully and effect an entrance into the Lord's vineyard. An educated Native clergy is one of the pressing needs of India. An educated Native missionary has opportunities for Christian effort which neither his European brother nor the ordained catechist can fully command. With his good knowledge of English and of the vernacular; with his familiarity with English thought and the literature which is the constant outcome of it; with his intimate knowledge of Indian ways and wants, as well as Indian manners and customs; with his habits and physique suited to the land of his birth; with his tastes for study and reflections; with numerous friends among his former class-mates and fellow-graduates; and with the influence and status which his University gives to him; the Christian graduate has a unique sphere of consecrated activity before him. With my many failings and shortcomings, the past twelve years (now twenty-seven) of my missionary life—so full of patient toil and frequent dis-

couragements, and yet so full of solemn delight—have convinced me that every earnest graduate must give his first and best thoughts to the Christian ministry. "To whom much is given, of him much shall be required."

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### 5.—PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NATIVE CHRISTIANS.

I do not think there is any community in this country, or for that matter, in the whole world, that is so well-favoured as the Native Christians of India. Compared with other Indian communities, the truth of the remark will strike one as self-evident. Compared with whole Christian nations in Europe and America, the truth will become evident on careful comparison. Our privileges are many and varied. We have been cared for and still continue to be cared for, as no other community has been in any part of Christendom. The excellence of mission machinery is such that as soon as a Native Christian is by baptism brought under its beneficent control, there is practically no end to his progress so long as he keeps himself in harmonious touch with one or another of its parts. From birth to death he is the fortunate member of a fortunate community. If he rises, it is due to his privileges; if he falls, it is due to himself. Generally speaking this is not the case in Christian countries. Such machinery as we have in India is wanting there. The individual is, as a rule, left to struggle for himself. At all events, there are hardly any privileges such as we are accustomed to. In broad contrast, here the religious machinery takes care of the individual; there the individual has to take care of the religious machinery.

In indicating a few of our privileges, we shall take it for granted that we possess the highest of all. Our very name implies it. Saved by the grace of Christ from the guilt and power of sin, we possess or are supposed to possess, the very roots of the tree of salvation. In this respect there is no comparison between us

and the other Indian communities. Still, it is not the purpose of this paper to dwell on this glorious privilege. The possession or non-possession of it is rather a matter for individual concern: though it is true that what concerns the individual concerns also the community. And each individual Native Christian should see that he is not a dead member of the community which bears the name of Christ. We shall therefore proceed to dwell very briefly on our social and secondary privileges.

And first among our privileges as a community may be mentioned those appliances which are intended to elevate us and our aspirations in every way. Wherever a few persons are baptized divine service becomes a regular institution. I have always looked upon the Sabbath service as the highest kind of social gatherings, to which our poor countrymen are perfect strangers. Week by week, and frequently even oftener, we meet for worship; and if our hearts are opened along with our ears, we carry home with us something that is precious. Our slumbering souls are awakened. Our sins and shortcomings are brought home to us. Peace is proclaimed, while pardon is announced to the penitent. Endless growth in grace is emphasized as our motto. And all this in a comfortably furnished edifice for which we have paid nothing, except perhaps a tiny little pie once a week. Just fancy what would become of the lives of 90 per cent. of our people but for these weekly social gatherings. What habits of punctuality, attentiveness, cleanliness, self-examination, charity, devotion and friendliness are unconsciously enforced upon us by these appliances. And, on the other hand, think of the religious festivals of our countrymen and the debasing and soul-destroying influence they exert upon them all through their life.

The very simplicity of our religious and social life is another of our privileges. We have literally no ceremonies to perform and no expenses to incur. The religious life of the Hindu is one series of more or less expensive ceremonies from birth to death.

Even posthumous ceremonies are demanded. We have nothing of the kind. Expense, we have little or none. Even our weddings and funerals ought not to be burdens, if we manage them with wise economy. While Hinduism drains the purse, the time and the strength of its votaries, Christianity does exactly the reverse; so that if we prove to be unworthy Christians, it cannot be because we have not performed our rites, or spent our income on religious ceremonies.

Our liberty, again, is not the least of our privileges. The moment a Hindu becomes a Christian, he leaves the land of slavery and enters that of liberty. His shackles fall and he begins to breathe the fresh air of freedom and light. So long as an Indian Christian keeps within the bounds of Christ's love, there is nothing on earth that can stand between him and his liberty. He may eat what he likes, and with whom he likes, and how he likes. And so with his clothing. He may also marry whom he likes. He is bound by no restrictions whatever. At least the Church imposes none on the exercise of his liberty. He leaves his caste behind and discovers a new caste, *viz.*, the caste of character which is cast in a Christian mould. And though he may feel strongly inclined to cling to his old notions and prejudices, he finds in course of time, that liberty is stronger than slavery, truth more enduring than falsehood, and the bond of love more binding than the ties of kith and kin.

Akin to the privilege of liberty is that of a common brotherhood. Imperfectly as this privilege has been realized and availed of it is nevertheless a blessing which is not even dreamt of by our countrymen. Our homage to a common Father begets a feeling of fraternity towards members of our community. Our countrymen may have learnt to *speak* of this, but it is only *we* who have *realized* it, such brotherhood makes the Native Christians of India one great family, and draws them together, far more powerfully than oneness of political aims and aspirations can ever hope to do. A privilege like this cannot be too highly prized in a land like India where the people are torn asunder

by the animosities of castes and sub-castes and can never combine except for political purposes.

Our educational facilities rank high among our privileges. The Native Christian lives and moves in an atmosphere of education. Christianity and education go together. The light of the soul is followed by the light of the mind. Even the poorest Native Christian does not go without an education suited to his capacity and condition. Girls as well as boys are taught. Education lies at the door of even the humblest cottage. The humblest hand has but to be stretched to pluck the fruit from the tree of knowledge. Our very service compels us to spell out the words of our hymns and prayers. There is no lad, however poor and lowly, if he is but well-behaved and industrious and intelligent, who cannot attain to the highest academical honours within his reach. And what is true of the boy is equally true of the girl.

The unique position which Providence has assigned us in this land must also be reckoned as one of our highest privileges. Christian morality ascends from earth to heaven. We represent the purest morality that has ever been realized among men. Like Jacob's ladder though there may be a great distance between the ideal and the actual in this respect, the fact remains that Christian morality is considered far purer than and vastly superior to any other morality in this country. Our position therefore follows this as a matter of course. The gradual elevation of the moral tone of the Hindus is practically placed in our hands. They naturally look up to our lives and our morals as the standard by which to shape their own. In a word we are summoned by God to mould the moral life of the land. We are each of us a "voice crying in the wilderness." Every solitary Native Christian in a heathen village is, as it were, a "light shining in darkness."

Socially, too, we are a privileged community. Occupying as we do a middle position between foreigners and our countrymen, and coming into closer contact with the former, we become the

unconscious channel through which flows the refinement of the west to the east. The fruits of civilization, it is our good fortune to reap first and then pass on to the Hindus. In many a social improvement, it is we who take the lead. Though it must be admitted that this privilege is not often unmixed with evil, it is nevertheless a precious privilege. The instruction of Hindu girls and women is almost entirely in the hands of poor Native Christian women, who, while they are forming their character, are at the same time improving the habiliments of their person. Class for class, contact with Native Christians seldom fails to produce a beneficial effect on the manners and customs of their Hindu neighbours.

Thus, in whatever way we may look at our condition we are a highly privileged race, flourishing like fertile oases in the great Indian desert. With the tree of salvation rooted deeply in our hearts, watered by the dews of heaven, manured and protected by kind Christian hands, growing from day to day, and bearing a rich variety of fruit in every sphere of human life, it is difficult to imagine a people so happy and blessed as the Native Christians of India.

These then are some of the privileges which have fallen to the lot of a small, isolated and scattered community like ours in this historical land. We can never be too thankful for this blessing. But privilege implies responsibility; and the greater the privilege, the graver is the responsibility. As a community, therefore, we have most important duties to perform and functions to discharge for the benefit of our countrymen. To our own community we are specially responsible. Our mission is thus two-fold; home and foreign. We should not lose sight of this double responsibility. We should endeavour earnestly to realize our position and enthusiastically carry out the work which our Master has coupled with our privileges.

First, then, we have a special mission to our countrymen. I speak as a community. Each of us is, of course, a volunteer in the mission field. "Would God all the Lord's people were

prophets?" applies with even greater force to Indian Christians than it did to the Jews of old. But to our community as such there is now a divine call to possess the land. Have we realized this aspect of our responsibility? Have we felt that we should form ourselves into a Missionary Society? Have we become aware that it is our privilege to begin, on however small a scale, a mission of our own, and pass on to our countrymen the inestimable blessing we have ourselves received? I am afraid not. But it is high time we did something. At the present moment we are in every way far more favourably situated than the handful of believers who rather more than a century ago met and prayed in a small room, raised a few shillings, set apart Cary as a missionary and thus founded the first English Missionary Society. All that I plead for is only a beginning. Material, we have enough. In this Congress of Native Christians from all parts of India, there ought to be formed a few who could accomplish this work. For the present, if only a single evangelist could be engaged, who like the late Ram Chandra Bose might go about the Indian continent and preach Christ in English in the great centres, it would be an excellent starting point. Such a man need not be a reverend. He need not ask much. Wherever he goes, he will find a hearty welcome. A single wealthy member alone could pay his salary. By means of missionary boxes and occasional efforts throughout India, a great deal might be raised. As we feel our way, vernacular preachers might be employed and the country divided into districts on the basis of language. Is this not a glorious duty calling forth the faith and generosity of us Native Christians. If we cannot thus organize a small missionary society and raise perhaps only a few hundred rupees and maintain a preacher to proclaim—not his church—but the Gospel which has saved him, I am afraid we possess very little vital Christianity. My appeal is to the earnest lay-leaders of our community.

Another responsibility is for the community to educate and

construct a healthy public opinion. This is now attempted, in some measure, by means of our Press (I am thankful to speak of our own fourth estate) and occasional papers. But this is not sufficient. We must widen our sphere, as well as the horizon of our views. There must be an interchange of opinion between Bengal and Bombay, and Panjab and Madras. Problems, often of the greatest difficulty, and yet seriously affecting our highest welfare, need careful and accurate solution. Topics have to be studied from varying standpoints. What is true in one part of India, may be different in another. The majority in the community need guidance and instruction. In short, a sound public opinion has to be created. Now, I think, that this can only be effected by forming ourselves into an Indian Christian Congress, moving annually with the Indian National Congress, reading and discussing papers and conferring together from time to time carrying out well-considered schemes for the improvement of the whole Indian Christian community. Such a Congress would, at least once a year, bring the leaders of our community into closer sympathy and union than would otherwise ever be the case, and thus weld together the scattered forces of the Indian church into one solid power.

Speaking of public opinion, I think it necessary to make a remark or two on our responsibility in connection with the Press. It must be our constant endeavour to make our Press all that it ought to be. If it is to command the attention of both our foes and friends, and be recognized as an educator by our community and an adviser by our Government, and a faithful exponent of Native Christian thought by our missionary friends, its utterance must be characterized by accuracy of information, breadth of view, independence of thought, absence of partiality, a well-balanced judgment, and above all, moderation in tone and criticism. Indiscriminate praise must be as carefully avoided as personal abuse. Superlatives must give place to dull positives. Our columns must be closed against the popular rubbish of the neighbourhood. Reason rather than



emotion should guide the course of this literary stream, so that wherever it flows it may "make glad the city of God" in this land.

Another responsibility that lies heavy on us is an intelligent study of our Christian Scriptures. We devour with guileless eagerness the theological literature that pours in from the West, but think of producing none of our own. An Indian Christian theologian is yet to be born. Instead of blindly accepting Western creeds and Western forms of discipline and government, why should not some of us devote our leisure to a careful study of an Eastern book like the Bible and the early literature and history bearing on it and elaborate a creed and form of Church government congenial to Indian thought and Indian habit. There is still a great deal of heathenism and superstition clinging to our present beliefs and modes of worship, which need elimination. We have to prepare the way for an Indian National Church. Here is an excellent field for promising graduates of a literary turn of mind. It was but the other day that a native Greek criticized rather severely the English translation of the Lord's Prayer. We need better and more idiomatic versions of the Scriptures. There is also a great cry for a healthy Vernacular literature for the masses. Let, therefore, this responsibility be seriously considered. A young man is far more responsible for his *leisure* hours which he may spend as he likes, than his *working* hours which are rather at his employer's disposal. Consecrated leisure ought to be the watchword of every Native Christian graduate. He is responsible for his leisure. Let the excellent example of our brethren, Messrs. Bannerjee and Sathianadhan, who, feeling this responsibility, are doing a noble work the one with his voice and the other with his pen for the regeneration of their countrymen. Rather than be encumbered with the grievances which beset the ministry in a foreign missionary service, let our educated young men rather seek as a rule good secular callings, and discover their duty in their leisure and their delight in voluntary mission-

ary labour. For what India needs is a strong indigenous body of able and earnest laymen, burning with zeal for their Master and love for souls, determined to know or care for nothing save their country's salvation. In such hands, rather than any other, I should place the future of our community.

I was asked to read a paper on the methods of bringing about union among Native Christians. On re-consideration I took the liberty of taking another topic. But to my agreeable surprise, I find that I have arrived at my original destination though by another road. The privileges and responsibilities I have dwelt upon are common to us all. Our mission and our message are one. We have to set aside our natural differences and unite together for missionary enterprise. We have to create a Native Christian public opinion for all India. We have to found an Indian Christian Congress and meet at least once a year for social intercourse and mutual edification. We have to labour for an Indian theology, with an Indian church looming in the distance. We have to co-operate for the dignity and influence of our Press, and the production of a healthy Christian literature in the Vernaculars. We have to realize more fully than ever our common brotherhood, and found Associations and Auxiliaries all over India, and thus give expression to this central truth. If, then, we go to work and endeavour to carry out one or more of these responsibilities, we shall begin to approach each other in sacred fellowship, we shall form a union, the bonds of which shall be stronger than those which ever bound together the members of a clique, clan or community.

After the reading of the paper the subject was thrown open for discussion.

MR. S. SATHIANADHAN, M. A., said that he would like to give expression to a line of thought which suggested itself to him while listening to the admirable paper of the Rev. J. Lazarus. A new crisis had been reached in Indian religious thought. There was a time when Christianity was opposed bitterly by the educated Hindus. The very name Christ was hated by them; but now it

was different. Christianity was no longer opposed but patronised. All the higher ethical ideals that we claim for as purely Christian are, we are told, found in Hinduism. The doctrines of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man were claimed by Swami Vivekananda and others to be as much Hindu as Christian. This being the case how are we to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity? Is it not by showing to others that our religion can bear fruit in conduct? Unless Indian Christians demonstrated to others the superiority of the Christian faith in this way—by living out Christianity in their lives—they were not fulfilling their duties in the least.

BABU KALICHURN BANNERJEE'S speech was as follows :—

My first feeling on rising to address you is one of thankfulness to God for Madras. Ever since I visited Madras six years ago I have always felt it to be the plainest indication of Providence that in the matter of shaping and guiding Indian Christian life our Madras brethren should take the lead. I, therefore, rise to address you with some diffidence. First, let me refer to the crisis in religious thought alluded to by my brother Mr. Sathianadhan. There was a time when I used to think that this crisis was hopeful to the progress of Christianity. My views on this subject have changed. I do not now congratulate myself upon this crisis. For what does this crisis mean? The present policy of non-Christians is to drag Christianity down to the level of Hinduism. Christianity is no longer recognized as having a unique position. The late Ram Chunder Bose in one of his writings has emphasized the fact that Christianity was not one of the religions but *the true* religion. In Bengal, it had become customary now for non-Christians to invite Christians to join them in any social or political or intellectual movement—provided that a Christian did not mind occupying the same platform as a Hindu, a Muhamadan, or a Buddhist. It was a solemn consideration whether or not we should allow non-Christians to give Christ a place and only a place along with other leaders of thought. I was invited by a Zamindar long ago to a *mela*, a fair, to speak about the

claims of Christianity. Christianity was, therefore, included in the programme of Tamashas and the Zemindar was to be the show-man. I declined the invitation for the same reason I declined to be present at the Parliament of Religions. This crisis should on no account be a cause of rejoicing to us, for it is an attempt to humiliate Christianity. Taking up one aspect of this crisis—we are told that all the high ideals of morality to be found in Christianity are to be found in Hinduism. Assuming that this is the case the question is:—How does the existence of these ideals in Hinduism manifest themselves among the professors of the Hindu religion? Does their life and action bear witness to these ideals? Let us shew that we not only possess these ideals in Christianity, but that we have also the power in Christ to give effect to these ideals in our life and conduct.

It is strange we don't hear anything of the excellence of the Hindu religion though we hear a great deal of the excellence of Hindu morality. Whenever my Hindu friends speak of the high moral ideals of Hinduism, I turn round and ask them is there power in Hinduism to attain these high moral ideals you speak of? It becomes us to indicate to them that that power is found in Christ and Christ alone. Our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. So long as we are not able to present something special, something distinctive, not only in our beliefs but also in our life, how can we demonstrate the superiority of our religion.

With regard to one or two points touched upon by Mr. Lazarus, let me make a few remarks. The simplicity of Christian worship we enjoy is no doubt a privilege, but it is a privilege which we ought to improve in a certain direction. Hindu religious worship, elaborate as it is, compels its votaries to subscribe largely to their temples. Should we not, therefore, follow the example of Hindus in trying to make our Churches self-supporting? Liberty was no doubt one of our great privileges. But liberty implies self-restraint. Let us not be solitary

Christians. We constitute a great brotherhood. We have to think of the weaker brethren. I am very glad to be present in your midst and take part in this meeting.

The Rev. C. N. BANNERJEE of the L. M. S., Calcutta, said that he, for one, did not take such a gloomy view of the crisis in Hindu thought that had been referred to. It must be remembered that Christ's name was honoured and His life admired at present which was not the case before. He impressed upon his audience the necessity for forming an Indian Christian Missionary organization. A fellow missionary of the L. M. S. in Benares had brought the subject forward and it had been taken up. It was the duty of Indian Christians to support their churches. As it was, they were receiving great privileges without giving back anything in return. There can be no progress if they were merely receivers.

The CHAIRMAN thanked the lecturer and the speakers and especially Babu Kalichurn Bannerjee for his able address. He fully endorsed Mr. Bannerjee's views with regard to the crisis in Hindu thought. Hindus did not now oppose Christianity, but they patronized it. The uniquely absolute position of Christianity should on no account be given up by Christians. As regards the formation of an Indian Missionary Agency that was no doubt a noble object, but there was something to be done previous to that as a preparation, and that was to make the Christian churches in this land self-supporting. This was an object which should be kept in view distinctly. He expressed his great pleasure at meeting friends from Bombay and Bengal on the occasion. The meeting terminated after the Benediction was pronounced.

## 6.—IMPRESSIONS OF A VISIT TO EUROPE.\*

It is by no means easy to put down in a brief introductory paper the impressions of a somewhat extended tour in Europe. It would require a volume to do so. But for the present, I shall try to dwell only on a few facts I have observed—especially such as may interest and inform our Association.

Europe presents many points of contrast to India. After leaving Port Said you enter upon a new world. The very colour of the sea is quite different—a bright blue. You begin to feel the cold. The torrid zone is left behind and the temperate is entered. All this in April, when in Madras you have to endure a temperature of 100°. In three or four days you set your foot on European soil, when the contrast becomes still more striking. Not merely climate, but complexion and character, costume and life, language and manners, food and houses, not to speak of other features, are totally different to what they are in this country. To the Indian, not America, Europe is the New World.

By a careful observation I have come to the conclusion that climate and Christianity are chiefly, if not wholly, responsible for the national characteristics of the European. They are so, more or less, according as each or both of these factors affect in a higher or less degree the people of any particular country. In other words, the people of Italy, where the climate is not so severe, differ considerably from those of Denmark, which is higher up in the zone. So also religiously. A purer form of religion produces a type of national character quite unlike that of a people whose creeds and ritual are more or less corrupt. Roughly speaking, in the great fabric of national character, climate supplies the foundation, and religion the superstructure. I shall briefly illustrate my position.

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\* A paper read by the Rev. J. Lazarus, B.A., at the M. N. O. A. General Meeting, held in the Memorial Hall, on Saturday, the 20th February, 1904.

The qualities which the Indian admires in the European, and at the same time deplors their absence in himself—such as vigour, activity, value of time, strength, courage, power of endurance, perseverance and the like—are not his own making; they are gradually forced on him by the severity of his climate. It is almost always raining in Europe. You can never be sure of a bright day as in India. If it is true that there is no winter in India, then it is also true that there is no summer in Europe. How many picnics are spoilt by this sudden and unexpected rain! How often have I opened my shutters in the morning in the hope of seeing the sun shine but was disappointed to find it raining. Rain, then, is an essential element in the early formation of character. To escape its evil consequences to health, you have to provide yourself with the umbrella and the over-coat. What is this but a training for preparedness to meet and overcome difficulties? The severe cold on the one hand, and the incessant rain on the other, compel one to walk at the greatest speed. During my first days in London, I was outstripped by many a young girl. This fast walking produces in its turn habits of activity and punctuality, not to speak of increased vigour and health. In London and other great cities of Europe men run; they do not walk. At the end of six months' stay I became an energetic and fast walker—such is the effect of the European climate.

And when we remember that these climatic conditions have lasted for thousands of years, one can well comprehend their increasing effect on the European nations as a whole, not only steadily creating but proportionately intensifying and crystallizing their national character. Any little doubt I had in my mind regarding the wonderful influence of climate on character was dispelled by what I observed in Italy. I look upon the Italian as a missing link between the European and the Indian. He has neither the rich crimson-stained white complexion of the Northern Teuton, nor his marked features of energy and force of character, but is, in many respects,

Indian in character—pleasure-loving, slow, indolent, loquacious and polite, and even poverty-stricken—all the result of an enervating Italian sun. In the streets of Rome and Naples women and men might be seen standing idly watching the passers-by, or crying out their wares at the top of their voice as in Eastern towns—a sight I have seldom witnessed in the Northern countries of Europe.

A word about the national superstructure. Here we ascend from physical to ethical characteristics. Christianity is wholly responsible for the latter. Ten to nineteen centuries of Christianizing forces have left their indelible impress on the national mind. The mythical deities of hate, revenge, and lust are now totally forgotten. Their baneful influence on national character is for ever lost. In their place a God of love and purity, revealing His heart and mind in the person of Jesus Christ, has been placed before the people of Europe—a conception of the Deity which has considerably raised the moral tone of Europeans as a whole. A little girl of even Godless parents would blush if caught telling a lie or uttering an impure word. Family purity, obedience to parents, rest on the Sabbath, scrupulous keeping of an engagement, thoroughness of work, aversion for indebtedness, a disposition to earn rather than beg, individual responsibility, general literacy, equality of the sexes, independence of thought and action, respect for law and order—these are some of the main features of the national fabric. Those practising these virtues—so rare amongst us—may or may not be *Christians*; in fact, they are as much the property of the latter as of the former. In the erection of this national character, Christianity has been merely the scaffolding—indispensable in the course of creation, but ignored and rejected thereafter.

A young girl, belonging to respectable parents, goes out to a distant place and takes service—and not a word dare be even breathed against her character. She goes out and comes in like a young man, and is never embarrassed in the presence of



the sterner sex. Each man thinks and acts for himself, eats and dresses as he likes and marries whom he will. The moment a young man marries, he starts his own home and never more stays under his parental roof. London or Paris looks like a silent forest on Sundays, when all business or trade is at a standstill. Beggars, who are the pest of Indian towns, are not to be seen in most European cities. In Denmark and Switzerland 90 per cent. of the population can read and write; in England and France it is not much below; while in India it is only 6 per cent. for the whole and 6 per thousand for women! It is a most common thing for a maid-servant to be reading or writing while at leisure in the kitchen; while a shoe-maker returning home in the evening buys his half-penny paper and acquaints himself with the news of the world for the day. There is no bargaining in the shops or stalls—the prices are all fixed. A child may be sent to the market and return home none the worse for her simplicity. These are all matters which have come under my personal observation, and go to illustrate the ethical and social features of character described above. In the matter of civilization, therefore, India is far behind Europe; so far behind that, in my opinion, even after the lapse of five centuries an Indian Deputy Collector can scarcely enjoy the civilized and comfortable home of a European shoe-maker.

Privacy of home life is peculiar to Europe. It plays an important part in the morality of the people. Children have no chance whatever—as is the case in this country, where adult life and language are seen in the open street—of acquiring a premature knowledge of things forbidden. This too is an indirect effect of a rigorous climate. Owing to the severity of the cold, the houses and rooms are constructed so as to be closed air-tight as it were. It is indeed true that scores of families live in the same house or premises; but each family leads its completely secluded life within its own rooms, so much so, that one family never knows (except by inquiry) who

its next door neighbour is. In a single building in Holborn, London, 5,000 people live together without in the least degree violating the privacy of home life. My reference is not to the drags of European society. In the matter of house accommodation, therefore, India and Europe are as far as under as the poles. Here the doors and windows are always opened; in Europe they are always closed. The first time I was shown my room in a hotel in Venice and the door was closed on me, I felt somewhat nervous as if I had been confined in a prison—the experience was so new and strange. In the slums of large cities, however, this privacy is often impossible. Any way, India ought to adopt, as far as our climate will allow, this excellent feature of European life. Indian Christians will do well to set an example in this respect.

Partly as a result of general education—for knowledge is power and pay all over the world—and partly as a result of the difficulty of procuring the necessaries of life, wages run high. In India food is cheap, and the necessaries of life are easily procured. I have often seen a poor Panchama woman go out with her basket, and after a while return home with enough for a supper for herself and family. Such a thing could not even be attempted in Europe. There everything has to be purchased, including the extra items of coal, woollen clothing, and house-rent. And in the dear season when the icy hand of dread winter lays all vegetation under the shadow of death, and nothing could literally be expected from nature, the condition of the penniless poor of Europe is wretched in the extreme. The sight of Italian beggars lashing their arms into their sides as a remedy against cold and hunger is one I shall never forget. The working man, therefore, is very well off. His wages are on the average about ten times the wages of an Indian skilled labourer. Herein lies the secret of the unbridgeable gulf between the beggarliness of India and the wealth of Europe. In a little State like Denmark, with only a population of two millions and a half—not much more than that of one of

our larger districts—the average earning of an adult per month is about Rs. 65. Compare this with the pittance of Rs. 2½ for the average Indian adult. Education makes all the difference. The Tamil poet said more than a thousand years since that figures and letters are eyes. The European labourer's eyes are opened. He is well aware of the fact that he is the foundation of the social fabric. He claims good wages and gets it. If our community is ever to rise above the average Indian, education is indispensable. Let us aim at securing the educational percentage of Europe.

It has often occurred to me why our Government takes no special interest in primary education. To leave 94 per cent. of its male subjects in a state of chronic illiteracy is something awful—if not culpable. Even in England primary education has been very slow, and, till recently, disgracefully behind that of Switzerland and Denmark. Let us hope that what has been started in England will be extended to India. For, unless the inner eyes of the Indian people are opened, there is little hope of the country ever emerging from its poverty and wretchedness. Why should not some of our enterprising primary trained teachers open schools in Indian villages without looking to Missions for employment? One could hardly gauge the measure of influence and the power for good such an enterprise, if undertaken with tact and in the right spirit, would bring about even in a decade.

In Europe there is no hankering after higher education. Unlike here where every lad aims or rather is made to aim at the B. A., whether he has brains or not, European parents are very judicious in this matter. It is only promising sons that are sent to Universities, and that, only if the purse allows it. I should say that rather than education, trade and industry are the rage of the day. Of an M. P's family, I found one a baker's assistant, another a milliner, a third a railway clerk, and the fourth was being bred a farmer. The second son of a Canon was going out with me to Penang to join his elder

brother as an Indian Rubber planter. There is no contempt for manual labour as such. A clergyman's educated daughter takes service often as a governess or lady-help, sometimes even as a servant-maid and does not regard it *infra dig.* thus to earn her own bread.

A liberal education is not forced, but rather sought for its own sake, the gifted young man choosing the special branch or science for which he has a special aptitude. I have had the privilege of visiting eleven Universities and a great many Colleges and Grammar schools and comparing notes as regards Indian and European education. So far as curricula and examinations are concerned, viewed as a whole, there is not much difference between the two systems—and if any thing, our examinations are more difficult. Still, as a matter of fact, we admit the general superiority of a European graduate. There are many reasons for this strange fact. First of all, we must not forget the superior national characteristics already created and fostered by climate and religion. The European graduate comes from a cultured home, an heir of all the excellent qualities which heredity places at his disposal. The whole national and political life and his own surroundings are such as to widen his views and promote inquiry. Early school education and training give him a wealth of knowledge and information to which the Indian student is a perfect stranger. The number of languages to be studied, be it ever so imperfectly, affords an excellent discipline of the mind. Regular sports make the mind healthy and fresh and fit it for hard study without exhaustion. At Cambridge it is considered disgraceful for a young lad to spend the afternoon in study. The object of education seems to be not so much to cram up text books as to develop the faculties, and stimulate original thought and research. Under such circumstances, why should not the European graduate surpass the Indian? Lofty peaks can only rise from a mountain range. At the University of Copenhagen I noticed an excellent system. The first year is

invariably spent in the study of philosophy. I wish this could in some way be adopted in India. For, in Madras, a young man may become a Master of Arts or a Doctor of Medicine without knowing anything whatever about his mind or its faculties and their functions. The absence of natural history in our school courses is another matter for regret. Somebody has said that the Madras B. A. knows no other bird but the crow! Pupils of Board Schools are occasionally taken *en masse* in trains with their teachers to the fields and forests and allowed to roam at pleasure collecting curiosities and gathering a rich variety of information, while a swimming bath is a regular part of the school curriculum.

The difference in physique between the Indian and the European cannot fail to strike even the most superficial observer. What always struck me as most striking in man or woman in Europe was the wrist. The European wrist is invariably 50 per cent. broader and thicker than the Indian wrist. My big trunk which had to be lifted and carried by three men here was in London lifted by a single porter and neatly poised on his shoulder. I look upon the size of the wrist as a sure indication of physique. The individual may be tall or short, or broad or slender, but the wrist is significant by its size and firmness. We Indian Christians, women as well as men, are, as a rule, a puny race with a natural aversion for exercise or sports. Much of our future prosperity and influence will depend on our physique. Why should we not endeavour to wipe away the disgrace implied in the saying that fifty Europeans are enough to put five hundred Asiatics to flight.

Two sights attracted my special attention as proofs of affinity between Indians and Europeans: Hampton Court in London and the ruins of Pompei, near Naples. Hampton Court was the residence of the English Sovereigns more than a century ago. Now it is open to the public for inspection. On going through the long series of rooms, I was astonished to find that the old fashioned bed rooms, the articles of furniture

they contain, the pictures and paintings on the walls, and other details, bore a strong family likeness to similar things in India. The royal apartments reminded me of a Zamindar's bed-rooms in India—even in matters of taste! I might add here that the dingy little room in Edinburgh castle in which King James VI. of Scotland was born is no better than a very ordinary Indian room. Worse still is the dismal dungeon in the Tower of London in which so many noted persons, including Lady Jane Grey, were incarcerated for life. One wonders that in those days the moral tone of Europeans did not rise much higher than that of African chiefs. The ruins of Pompei were even more striking, so very Indian in certain respects that I asked myself the question, could the ancient Hindus and Italians have at one time lived together as one nation? The Pompei house is a veritable Indian house. I noticed in it the street pial, the narrow entrance, or *nadai*, the open court surrounded by the hall and bed rooms, pials in bed-rooms instead of cots, the kitchen with its copper vessels, absence of upper storeys, and paintings of different kinds on the walls. While passing through the apartments I felt as if I was visiting an Indian friend's dwelling house. Even their wine-shops resemble the Indian toddy-shop. I leave it to antiquarians to go deeper into these similarities.

In the matter of costume I was glad to find that all the educated people of Europe dress exactly alike. There are of course the picturesque Highland, Swedish, Swiss and other costumes. These are either relegated to antiquity, or reserved for special occasions. In some places, old people from the country may be seen in such garbs. But the educated man or woman, and even those who desire to be considered such, wear the same kind of dress. For the matter of that I could scarcely distinguish a Turk with a hat on, from a *bona fide* European. This is as it should be. In these days of universalism, it is desirable that educated people all the world over should adopt the same mode of dress. As in days

of old, so even now, Paris leads the fashion. Still, there is a great deal of mutual borrowing and imitating among the various nations. The English are no more inventors of their costumes than the Italians are of theirs. You have only to look at pictures of persons who lived a generation or two ago, to be convinced of the marvellous changes costumes have since undergone. The question of costume is indeed a serious one for us who are in a way leading our community in this as in other matters. For my part, I think that the complete European costume with the graceful Asiatic turban—such as I wore during my sojourn in Europe—would befit us admirably. The European maid-servant's uniform deserves at least a passing notice. Other things considered, to my eyes there was no more pleasing object than the sprucely dressed maid-servant, noiselessly flitting about the rooms, with her snow-white cap and apron shining in contrast with the rich black of her dress. I often wondered when our Indian women-servants would come up to this high level of neatness, steady plodding industry and general education.

The Municipalities of Europe are in every way an object lesson to India. There is no need for me to refer to gigantic corporations like those of London or Paris. I shall dwell on the smaller municipalities. In this particular, Madras, with its half a million people, cannot compare with an ordinary European village of even 3 or 4,000 people. In such a town, for village it might not be called, there are all the conveniences of modern civilized life. The houses are two to six stories high, the ground floors with their huge, but brilliant glass frontage, being utilized for shops. Every house is supplied with pure drinking water, by means of pipes from a lofty water tower, even in the sixth storey, and brilliant electric or gaslights. The streets are mostly paved with stone with raised foot-paths on both sides for pedestrians. I have found this the universal custom in Europe. A child may walk through a crowded town and yet return home, uninjured by horse or carriage. The roads are clean and smooth,

in spite of the almost daily rain. There is neither dust in wind, nor mud in rain. There are grocers', butchers' and bakers' stalls in every big street,—while not only bread and milk but even meat and fish are brought to the door. The long rows of houses, often built on the same plan, present a most beautiful appearance, especially at night; while the roads and streets, lit with gas or electricity at very near intervals, look gay and bright with well-dressed pedestrians and handsome vehicles. Now, what is Madras by the side of such a village? It is truly a beggarly, what is benighted village—not worth the name of a city. Verily, Indian beggarliness penetrates the whole land—from the humble peasant up to the proud municipality. Education alone can raise our country to a higher level.

Europe is nominally a Christian continent. I must however say I was rather disappointed at the religious condition of this the most enlightened continent. I have already referred to the national characteristics which are the indirect influence of Christianity. There is of course a very small faction of the population who are believers—who constitute the church militant of Europe; of these I shall speak later on. I was informed by an Anglican clergyman that 75 per cent. of the people of London—which, by the way, contains about 6 million inhabitants—never enter a church. This had been ascertained by a most elaborate and expensive census. The condition of London may be taken as an index of the religious condition, of the whole continent. For aught I know it may be even worse—certainly not better. Take Copenhagen, for example. It has a population of half a lakh. There are only 37 churches, several of which I visited and even worshipped in. On an average, each may seat about 6 to 800 persons. But put it down at a thousand. This means that about 40,000 persons are the only professing Christians in the capital of Denmark. The remaining 460,000 practise no sort of religion. I have come across towns in Denmark with 12,000 people with only a single church. The Europeans in India are a fair index of their compatriots in



the West. On the other hand, in Catholic countries like France and Italy, it is mostly women who attend mass or go for confession. Superstition prevails to an alarming extent. The Word of God is a sealed book in these countries. But granting that Christianity is the nominal creed of these people, I am safe in saying that materialism is the religion of the greater part of Europe. Jupiter, Venus and Saturn have been replaced by Mammon, Bacchus, Nicotine and Cupid. In a word, Pleasure is the most popular god. Unlike the Hindu, the European is by nature irreligious. The climate makes him so. From early childhood, his chief concern is how best to grapple with the severities of cold and hunger, and procure, with the least difficulty, the necessities and comforts of life. No wonder, therefore, that Europe has never given birth to a religion—a feature so characteristic of tropical Asia with its luxuriance of weather and vegetation—affording ample leisure for the contemplation of the more serious problems of life.

Still, true Christianity flows on like a gentle stream winding among the plains of Europe, enlivening the regions around, and bringing peace and purity wherever its waters spread. It affects public opinion in a marvellous degree. Sovereigns and statesmen unconsciously own its sway and bow down to its mandate. Its influence is strongest where its practice is purest. Its vitality is exhibited in the sacredness of its gatherings, the profuse abundance of its literature, the pure and self-sacrificing lives of its votaries, the endless diversity of its operations, the periodic appearance of preachers fired with apostolic zeal, its constant but gigantic combat with the formidable evils of the age, its all but miraculous conquest of souls, its anxiety to bring the Gospel to the heathen, and its stupendous effort to circulate the Word of God. But the missionary activity of Protestant Europe which began rather more than a century ago seemed to me to have reached its maximum. Although wonderful results have been achieved by this enterprise and

flourishing churches have bloomed like oases in the wilderness of paganism, funds are not flowing fast enough to overtake the rapid advance of missionary effort. I happened to be in London during what are called the "May Meetings"—when more than a hundred missionary societies celebrate their anniversaries. The one great cry was that of indebtedness. Almost every large society was in debt to the extent of many thousands of pounds. Every conceivable device was being availed of to wipe off the debts and gather in fresh gold and silver—a feature of missionary effort which did not wholly commend itself to my Indian judgment. I felt there was something wrong in all this feverish enthusiasm.

It also struck me that missionary work in Europe itself for its own heathens, was by no means commensurate with the evils within the camp. Where the church is wedded to the State, the effort is languid and spasmodic; and where the church is free and self-supporting, the officers are too much engrossed with the serving of tables. Home-work occupies but a secondary place in the church's programme. It lacks the fascination of foreign enterprise. Men of inferior talent and training are set apart for the work. Open-air preaching is seldom carried on in an organised form. I should like to have seen at least a similar amount of zeal displayed to that in the cause of foreign missions.

On the other hand, on foreign missions themselves, the amount of money spent, though to us, poor Indians, at this immense distance, it looms very large, being about a million and a half a year for England alone, becomes utterly insignificant by the side of the £47 million lavished annually on the god of tobacco. As for the other nations of Europe, Christians as they are called, the comparison would be even worse. I would not frighten you with the colossal amount of the Drink Bill of Europe. The wonder then is not that Europeans contribute so largely, but so miserly, to the cause of foreign missions. The secret is that those who subscribe for missions in

one form or another are not those who habitually smoke and drink. It is largely the middle class poor and a few among the wealthy that have to support the missionary enterprise. A fortnight's stay in London would give an observer a tolerably correct list of the well-to-do persons who contribute largely to various missionary societies—they are so few.

Leaving out of account the social and moral characteristics which are of necessity a slow growth extending over centuries, believers in India compare very favourably with believers in Europe. In graces and gifts of the spirit, in devotion to the Saviour, in attendance on the means of grace, in all good works, in readiness to sacrifice their lives for the truth, Indian Christians, necessarily, though ignorantly, despised and distrusted for their lower moral condition, need not be ashamed. But I should like to see a burning missionary spirit roused and strengthened in our community. I should like to see men of deep learning and original research arise from our churches; and, if possible, go to Europe and bear witness in eloquent words to the transforming power of the Gospel of Christ. I should like to see our churches shake off all foreign fetters, put on new strength, formulate their own creeds and rituals, ordain their own pastors, send out their own missionaries to unoccupied fields, translate for themselves the Word of God and leave alone the Churches of Europe, which are torn asunder by a thousand factions, each in turn scorning the others, so much so, that to a poor, distracted Indian student roaming from service to service, ritual to ritual, and church to church, the question returns with redoubled echo, "Where after all is the Truth as it is in Jesus?"

## SECTION III.

# RELIGIOUS PAPERS.

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### I.—GOD AND CONSCIENCE.

The object of this lecture is not to discuss in detail the various theories that have been propounded regarding the origin, nature, and development of what is commonly called conscience. Its object is simply to bring forward a few facts relating to the moral faculty in man and the intimate relation which exists between it and God. In treating of conscience we need not take into account those conditions of it which are the result of either severe culture combined with other influences or extreme or habitual neglect. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves to the workings of the moral faculty as it obtains among millions of human beings all over the globe.

What then is the simple, primordial conscience? In order to have this question answered, we shall imagine a case of every-day occurrence. A person is about to perform a certain action. But just then he perceives it to be wrong. There is besides something in him that tells him he should not do it, and he feels he is under obligation to obey this command. Other considerations, however, are brought to bear on his will and he at last decides to do it. The deed is done, no one knows anything about it. It brings him some gain in the form of pleasure, property, or both. But the person is not at all happy; he feels guilty in his inmost soul. The outward gain the action has brought him soon vanishes away, but the painful recollection of the forbidden act lasts as long as his mind retains its power of remembrance. On the other hand, let us suppose the person in question decided not to do the act which he felt

to be wrong. This decision, instead of yielding him any gain, may have even caused him some loss. Still, he feels happy in the depths of his heart.

Now, we have all experienced such states and activities of the soul whenever we have had to deal with questions of right and wrong. Let us proceed to analyse this mental operation. And what do we find first of all, there is a perception that a certain action is right or wrong; secondly, there is the feeling that we ought to do what is right, and not do what is wrong; thirdly, there is a pleasurable or painful sensation according as we have done right or wrong. To the faculty of mind which performs this three-fold operation we give the name of conscience. For convenience' sake we have said 'action'; but it may be any motive, thought, word, deed, or desire; in fact, any exercise of the will which involves the question of right or wrong. There are of course instances in which the rightness or wrongness of actions is not instinctively and, for that matter instantaneously perceived by conscience. But these are very rare, and chiefly relate to social and other complicated questions. So far as individual men are concerned, in the ever-recurring duties and toils of daily life, involving the "eternal verities of truth and justice," conscience never ceases to operate, nay, within this sphere, it is infallible. It is as old as the race. Its voice is universally heard. Untutored, it utters its notes with no uncertain sound.

Conscience is intuitive. It is not the result of education. To say that it is, would be a contradiction in terms. Education does, indeed, draw forth the powers of the human soul, but it by no means creates those powers. Mill has somewhere said that evolution is an excellent explanation of the process of development in nature, but he asks: What about the commencement of that process? Who gave the first start? The perception of right or wrong in actions, desires, and motives is a self-evident truth. It is not to be discovered by a more or less tedious process of reasoning. The moment an act or thought

is presented to the will, that very moment its rightness or wrongness is seen and felt. The moral eye sees it as intuitively as the bodily eye beholds the difference between light and darkness. Everybody knows this. No education is necessary. The veriest child on earth is aware that to tell an untruth is wrong. We have all noticed how if a child has told a lie it hangs down its head and dares not look you in the face? 'Thou shalt not lie' is as good an axiom as that the whole is greater than its part.

A great Tamil poet says,

To one, what ought to be done is virtue ;  
What ought not to be done is vice.

We ask, and ask with reason, how it was that Tiruvalluvar, and all the other great poets and sages who lived thousands of years before him in different countries arrived at one and the same conclusion regarding the essential distinction of right from wrong.

The workings of conscience are invariably the same everywhere. If stealing is wrong in England, conscience does not alter its verdict and say it is right at the Antipodes. Stealing is condemned everywhere and in every age and nation. If in certain countries, society or government has ruled contrary to the teachings of conscience and men have grown accustomed to such a morbid state of things, still the moral instincts of individual men seldom or never fail to revolt against such violations.

It must be observed here that conscience covers a very large extent of ground. Not all the sections of the penal code, not all the acts and laws of governments and nations, not all the rules and regulations of society can ever coincide with the vast domain of conscience. Can the Penal Code detect and punish the unlawful desire, the proud look, the lustful eye, rancorous envy, burning revenge, lascivious thoughts, and all the other countless sins that rise like a swelling surge from time to time

within the depths of the soul? No. The laws of the land can only touch a few ripples here and there on the surface. Deeper they cannot dive. By far the greater and more important portion of human iniquity is beyond the puny grasp of the Penal Code. We meet with millions of men who have never even once in their life-time found themselves in the clutches of the law, but there is not one single individual who has escaped the stings and condemnations of conscience. It penetrates everywhere—into the inmost recesses of the heart. It is omnipresent like God Himself, taking cognisance of all hidden motives and desires and all the minutest acts and exercises of the will.

Conscience claims absolute supremacy. Its dictates are to be obeyed at any cost. Whatever other forces may move us to action, conscience is the only one that claims implicit obedience. It enforces its demands with a threat. When conscience says, "Thou shalt," or "Thou shalt not," nothing should come in between the command and the will. Nothing in the whole universe can change the "Thou shalt" into "Thou shalt not" or the latter into the former. Even God cannot alter the dictates of the moral sense, because, as we shall see presently, if He did so, He would act contrary to His own nature. Have you ever estimated the terrific weight of the little word 'ought'? Is there anything in the universe that can weigh against it? "If you please," says the well-known Boston lecturer, "sum up the globes as so much silver, and the suns as so much gold, and cast the host of heaven as diamonds on a necklace into one scale, and if there is not in it any part of the word 'ought', if "ought" is absent in the one scale and present in the other, up will go your scale laden with the universe, as a crackling paper scroll is carried aloft in a conflagration ascending towards the skies." Thus the claims of conscience are supreme, absolute—they are to be fulfilled against any odds. Everything that goes against it must be sacrificed, be it wife or child, father or mother, brother or sister, property or pleasure,

friends or fame. As a German philosopher puts it, the truth is not so much that man has conscience as that conscience has man.

Whether the will obeys the dictates of conscience is quite another question—very often it does not. There is anarchy in the soul. But this does not detract a whit from the supremacy of the moral sense. In every case, it does its duty most faithfully and utters its note of warning, in a clear, audible voice. Oh, that it had power as it has authority! If I obey, I cannot but feel happy; if I disobey, I cannot escape the inward misery that results from my mutinous conduct. Thus conscience rewards and punishes the soul according as the latter obeys or disobeys its commands. "There is no evil," says an American writer, "that we cannot either face or flee from, but the consciousness of duty disregarded. A sense of duty pursues us ever. It is omnipresent like the deity. If we take to ourselves the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, duty performed or duty violated is still with us, for our happiness or our misery. If we say that darkness shall cover us, in the darkness, as in the light, our obligations are yet with us. We cannot escape their power, nor fly from their presence. They are with us in this life, will be with us at its close, and in that sense of inconceivable solemnity which lies yet further onward, we shall still find ourselves surrounded by the consciousness of duty to pain us, wherever it has been violated, and to console us so far as God has given us grace to perform it."

We shall now turn our attention to another aspect of conscience, and endeavour to describe the part it plays in the religious world. In other words, we shall treat of the relation between God and conscience, in a word, of God in conscience. It is a fully admitted saying that on earth there is nothing great but man, and that in man there is nothing great but mind. And to this we may safely add the truth that in mind there is nothing great but conscience. Webster was once asked what his



greatest thought was. He replied that the greatest thought that had ever entered his mind was his personal responsibility to a personal God; and conscience reveals this personal God to us. Whatever may have been the case with ancient thinkers, modern scientific research hesitates to accept the belief in a personal God. Spencer says that "our belief in an omnipresent eternal cause of the universe has a higher warrant than any other belief, that is, that existence of such a cause is the most certain of all certainties; but asserts we can assign no attributes whatever and that it is absolutely unknown and unknowable." The world's last great logician, John Stuart Mill, goes a step further. In his posthumous essay on Religion, he says that the argument from design in nature, as illustrated by the adaptation of means to ends and part to part, especially in the wonderful intricate structure of the eye, goes to prove that the ultimate cause is an intelligent person. Of this concession he is, however, rather doubtful. Rational criticism, he adds, may yet make further progress and discover new methods of demolishing the argument from design. Therefore, all that we can infer from our study of natural phenomena is that there must be an intelligent First Cause, who must necessarily be a Person. But conscience guides us within the veil and brings us much nearer the Divine Being. If in nature we get distant glimpses of God's face, in conscience we behold the light of His countenance. If in nature, we find him an intelligent Ruler, in conscience we discover Him as our moral governor. If in nature, we see His works of wonder and wisdom, in conscience we hear His voice of law and love. Look within, said the sage, if you would look above. "He that knoweth himself knoweth God" is a well-known Tamil saying.

According to a German philosopher, conscience is simply consciousness of God. God dwells in conscience. It is the temple of His Light. In it--and through it, man is brought into continual contact with his Maker. It is in conscience that

man for the first time beholds his God, and it is only thereafter that he traces the marks of His being and power in the outer world. It is in the inner world that man obtains the first glimpses of his beneficent Lawgiver. And then the earliest proof of God's will and love, which we derive from conscience, is both fuller and more forcible than any evidence that is afforded by a careful study of the outer world. Fuller, because in conscience and conscience alone does man come to know something of the moral nature and will of his Maker. Before he is aware of any other law, he hears the Divine voice whispering, "Thou shalt," or "Thou shalt not." And more forcible, because no man has ever succeeded in ridding himself of the powerful testimony of his conscience.

Further, conscience is the true and only foundation of all religion. Together with the natural sense of dependence, conscience constitutes the religious instinct in man. If men have always believed in God, if they have invariably sought to appease the anger of their deities, if they have erected temples and built shrines in their honour, if they have performed yagams and offered sacrifices of men as well as of animals, if they have always feared death and judgment after death, if they have left home and kindred and fled to the forests, if they have performed severe austerities and mortified their bodies in the cruellest manner, if they have composed Scriptures and attributed to them divine authorship, it has been all conscience. Whatever the errors and vagaries in the superstructures of the world's many religions, they are all built on one and the same foundation—the human conscience. It is true, alas, that the superstructure has usurped the place of the foundation. If men would but go back to the source, there would be but one simple religion for the whole world.

Like the compass needle, which, while it points to the north, also points to the South, so conscience performs a double duty. Not only does it reveal to us the existence and will of our maker, it also reveals to us our destiny, the chief end and aim

of our life. To an earnest soul, the study of this function of conscience ought to be most essential.

How then does conscience point out our destiny? Just as God has furnished beasts, birds and insects with instincts, by obeying which they are to fulfil their respective destinies, so likewise has He endowed man with certain instincts which prompt him to carry out his higher destiny. As the bee, led by instinct, flies about in the fittest season, gathers honey from every opening flower and treasures it up in the honey-comb it has already built, thereby securing shelter and food for its numerous progeny, so man's moral instincts propel him to do the right and shun the wrong. Each time he obeys these instincts he feels happy, and each time he disobeys them he feels sad and guilty, in spite of all outward considerations. And ere long it becomes clear to him that his true destiny is to follow the indications of his faithful guide. Thus conscience reveals to him the glorious truth that his Creator's will is that he should enjoy the highest and most lasting bliss and that his God of law is also the God of love. For conscience points out his course every moment of his life, saying, "This is the path you must tread if you would be truly happy. Deviate from it, and you miss the end of your life."

Whoever perseveres in listening to the behests of his conscience gains an ever-increasing love for the right and a corresponding degree of aversion for the wrong. It is quite the reverse with him who habitually slights the warning voice of his faithful monitor. In either case character is formed, and the character thus formed and developed tends to a permanence, and the more permanent it becomes, the more difficult will it be to give it a contrary turn. Hence, the importance of attention to the dictates of conscience, for, like all other faculties of mind and body, conscience needs culture. Without it, the moral faculty gradually loses its vital energy and remains dormant in the soul. This is what is described in religious language as "being dead in trespasses and sins;"

"this is the condemnation that light is come into the world and men love darkness rather than light." As regards those persons who strive to follow the light and laws of conscience, the case is far from bright or hopeful. It is an endless, hopeless, helpless struggle. Instead of concord, discord reigns rampant in the soul. The will is utterly powerless when passion, appetite and the other inferior springs of action wage war against the moral faculty. The needle does indeed point to the north ; but the vessel is tossed about on the wide ocean of life by every gust of passion and lust that blows against it, and in the dense darkness which ensues the unfortunate steersman finds it quite impossible to perceive, much less to follow the indications of his needle. A sad and deplorable condition is this. Earnest men cry to God for help, strength and light. Hear the words of the world's poet : "conscience makes cowards of us all." "The dread of something after death puzzles the will."

"O coward conscience, how thou dost afflict me. The light burns blue. It is now dead midnight, cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh. I am a villain. My conscience hath a thousand several tongues and every tongue brings in a different and every tale convicts me for a villain." "O wretched man that I am," exclaims Paul, "who shall deliver me from this body of death?" In sentiments like these, the loud wail ascends to heaven from many an earnest soul. Will not a God of love listen to this plaintive cry and send His children a comforting reply? He will—nay, He has already done so. And thus we approach the last and greatest function of conscience. It not only reveals God as our loving moral Governor—it not only discovers to us our destiny and our utter inability to carry it out—it leads us back to History and reveals another conscience, namely, the conscience of humanity, as embodied in the unique life and person of Christ. The intellect often sees a benevolent sage in Christ, but it is the eye of conscience alone that beholds in Him a perfect conscience reigning

supreme in a perfectly balanced soul. Whoever sees God in conscience must perforce see God in Christ; for the claims of conscience and of Christ are identical. Revelation of religious truth begins in conscience and ends in Christ.

We have observed that the claims of conscience are supreme and that they demand obedience at any cost. We have seen that nothing in the whole universe can weigh against the little word 'ought.' This is a fact to which our experience bears ample testimony. Now it is a unique feature in the character of Christ that His claims to the allegiance of mankind are precisely the same as those of conscience. Listen to his words: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven." Once more "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brother and sister, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath he cannot be my disciple." Christ demands the supremest love. Anyone or anything that does not merit His full approval must be hated and forsaken. His approval is dearer than life. And further, to obey Christ is to obey conscience. If therefore conscience, besides revealing to us the will of God, leads the mind up to Him, much more does Christ the perfect Conscience of the race afford us a fuller revelation of the Father and draw us unto Him. He is as it were the prototype of conscience. In it, He is the "light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "He that doeth truth cometh to the light." But Christ is much more than conscience. If he by His life and teaching had merely pointed us to the right and commanded us to do it, enforcing His command with subsequent approval or disapproval, and had helped us no farther, He would have been of no more use

to us than conscience. He would not have been the divine answer to our cry for help and strength. But Christ came with a great deal more. He has undertaken to roll away the burden of accumulated guilt by virtue of the atonement He has achieved for the race, and says to the stinging conscience, "Peace, be still. I have paid the debt." He renovates the will so that it may yield an affectionate self-surrender to conscience. To the judgment He exhibits the highest good, and to the affections the noblest objects upon which to rest. In short, He communicates an entirely new life to the soul. All this He does by uniting Himself to him who would unite himself to Christ. Thus what is merely a divine spark in conscience appears a divine personality in Christ.

As conscience is the property of no particular people or caste, so Christ, the Son of man, belongs to the whole race. Conscience merely claims; but Christ comes with help as well as claim. Look right away then, from God in conscience to God in Christ, from dim twilight to bright sunshine: away from guilt and grief to pardon and peace; from weakness and despair to strength and hope; from depths of doubt to heights of certainty. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

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## 2. RELATION BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE Y. M. C. A.\*

"We have found the Messiah." In this significant utterance there is a distinct reference to the first Christian Church and the first Christian Young Men's Association. It was Andrew who uttered these memorable words. He and John had, only a few hours before, followed the Lord to His abode and avowed discipleship unto Him. The first Christian Church is thus started with only two members. But the little Church is hardly

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\* Read before the First Convention in Bombay.

a day old, when one of the young men starts on steady, aggressive work. He finds his brother Simon, and announces his "Eureka" to him. And Simon is brought to Jesus. The Master Himself brings in Philip, and no sooner is Philip brought in, than he persuades the somewhat sceptical Nathanael to "come and see" the Prophet of Nazareth. Thus three young men seek three other young men and lead them to the Truth, and the Church is doubled. Call it what you will, in this simple record of the evangelist we see both the spirit and activity of a genuine Young Men's Christian Association in the newly formed society of believers. The Association is no more developed than is the Church, but the germs of both are there, giving it may be the first feeble start to a movement which is encircling the globe and filling the hearts of young men with "righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost."

It may at first sight seem strange that the Church should have slept over her rights and responsibilities for well nigh twenty centuries, and only recently awakened to a sense of the marvellous power she has possessed from the very commencement, and which is now manifesting itself in the excellent organization in the Indian interests of which we are met in this National Convention. But it is not so. This long lapse of time is by no means strange. Great movements are not brought forth by leaps and bounds. And the greater the movement, the longer does it take to attain anything like a phenomenal representation. The banyan is the greatest Indian tree, but it takes several decades before it assumes its proper dimensions among the trees of this land. It took four thousand years for the announcement of the Messianic hope to reach its fulfilment in the manger of Bethlehem. Not that the Church has failed to exert, in some measure, the influence which is peculiar to the Young Men's Christian Association, but no regular organized effort of this kind had been started and sustained, until, by Divine guidance, the idea flashed across the mind of George Williams, who worked it out with the

ardour and ability of a great enthusiast. And at the present time the Young Men's Christian Association movement, with its counterpart in the Young Women's Christian Association, is one of those great and irresistible forces which are working, for the weal of man throughout the world.

India, however, has been more fortunate. Her Church is hardly two centuries old. And yet we are to-day holding the First Convention of the Young Men's Christian Associations of this country—few in number and feeble in the force they exert, yet bidding fair at no distant date to fill this ancient heathen land with centres for Christian activity and Christian philanthropy, from the sea to the bay and from the mountain to the cape. This Convention of delegates from different parts of India is in itself a proof that the Indian Church is awakening to a sense of her duty in this direction, while her sons are girding on their armour and grouping themselves into little bands for the final conquest of the land.

A few years ago when a proposal was made to the Madras Missionary Conference to start an Association in our "benighted" city, it was looked upon, at least by some of the members, as an attempt to start a rival Church. Allusion was made to former events, and the proposer was warned as to the danger of introducing a rival organization. I believe similar misgivings are entertained in other quarters as well; the Association is looked upon with somewhat suspicious eyes. Its aims are misconstrued, while its operations are regarded as interfering with the legitimate functions of the Church. With the Native Church it is still worse. The pastor fears that his young men are being drawn away to form a new Church. He feels, and keenly too, that any Christian work that is done by his young men, without the sanction or auspices of *his* Church, must be inimical to the interests of that Church.

Thus it will be seen that the relations between the Young Men's Christian Association and the Church need to be defined with clearness and precision, and misconceptions and preju-



dices have to be removed. For the efficiency and success of either depends largely on the right conception of the relation which exists between the Association and the Church, especially on the part of those who are responsible for the welfare of these organizations.

It is, indeed, surprising that there should be any doubt at all as to the exact relation between the Church and the Association. In this case, as in many others, to see is to know. What then do we see? We see first that the Church is a body of believers witnessing to the outside world, through the rites of baptism and communion, the gift and growth of the eternal life which they have received from their risen Lord. We see next that the Young Men's Christian Association is an organization of certain of those self-same believers, acting in unison and laboring for the spiritual and temporal welfare of young men. The relation, therefore, between these two bodies suggests itself at first sight. It is that of parent and child. If there were no Church, there would be no Association. The latter derives its origin from the former. And only so long as the members of the Association continue to be members in full communion with the Church, can they exist as a Christian body. They are like two concentric circles, with Christ for their common centre, but with spheres differing in area and magnitude. They agree in many respects. To some extent they cover the same area. Both owe allegiance to the same sovereign. Both fight under the same banner. Both are engaged in philanthropic enterprises. Both seek to win souls to the same Lord. Both seek blessings through the same channel. Both aim at mutual edification. Both try to search the Word and understand the mind of God. Both proclaim the dying love of the Divine Man.

But they also differ in many respects. They do not always cover the same area. The Church has her sacraments, her pastors, her regular services, her discipline and other rites which the Association has not. The Church cannot become

an Association without ceasing to be a Church. On the other hand the Association cannot usurp the privileges of the Church without violating the precepts of the Lord. The Church cannot, as such, take part in many of the sports and pastimes of the Associations. Lectures and concerts, cricket, and football, technical and industrial classes, restaurants and a host of other things, so necessary and agreeable to the success of the Association, are neither necessary to, nor quite compatible with, the spirit of the Lord's Handmaid. The Church, again, knows no distinction of sex, while the Association makes it an essential condition of safety and success. The Church has many sects, but the Association has none. The divisions of the Church are doctrinal, while those of the Association are merely local and accidental ; so that a member of one Association can always be admitted into another, on the mere production of his credentials, while a member of one branch of the Church cannot join another, without abandoning long-cherished doctrines or time-honored methods of ecclesiastical government. Thus, while both Church and Association seek to serve the Lord from the same motive, each fulfils it in the way best suited to its genius and surroundings. The Church delivers her message from the pulpit, while the Association announces its "discovery" wherever and whenever an opportunity is found. The Church seeks to edify all whether old or young, while the Association tries to win the hearts of the rising generation. What rivalry, then, can possibly exist between these bodies which sustain to each other the relation of parent and child ? How can a mother dislike or distrust her own child ; and how can a well-trained child venture to usurp the privileges of its parent ? The relation, therefore, is one of the most intimate nature, leading to the highest good of the race.

Having thus in a way defined the general relationship the Association bears to the Church, we shall now consider some of the leading features of this relationship. In the first place, the Association is the right arm of the Church. The Church

is, as it were, delegating to her right arm her work of saving souls—that part of her body which represents not indeed the maturity of her mind or the rich experience of her soul, but the best blood and muscular vigour of her constitution, the arm that can wield the Sword of the Spirit and dash to pieces the weapons of a carnal foe. Young men, ever the hope and stay of their families, are in a far higher sense the hope and stay of the Church. And these young men, when they are converted and consecrated to the service of the Lord, become the extended right arm of the Church. For, multiform as have been her efforts hitherto, she finds that her benevolence has not embraced hosts of young men, who in the most critical period of their life are unmindful of the highest interest of their souls, who pass their lives without God or hope in the world, having neither sympathy with the old nor touch with the young, but whom young men like themselves may attract with a winning word or a loving act. She discovers both need and supply. And faithful to this highest impulse, she has begun to enlist her young men—nay, her young women also—in the cause of Christian emancipation. Next to her general missionary effort, I think nothing can surpass the grandeur of this conception.

Our next convention will also be the Jubilee of the Young Men's Christian Association. And the history of this movement during such a comparatively short period affords ample evidence of the marvellous power for good it is destined to wield in the ages to come. When George Williams conceived the idea, he could no more have imagined the increasing vastness of this latest enterprise of the Church, than he who stands at the source of the Ganges and looks at the little rippling brook, can form any idea of the stupendous volume of its waters at its contact with the sea.

It is the Church then which has given birth to the Association. She has not only given birth to it, but she controls and guides all its operations. The voting members of the

Association are all members of the Church. Outsiders may be Associate Members, but they have neither voice nor vote in the finances or policy of the Association. It is altogether and essentially a Church movement—so much so, that its very existence depends on the vital connection of its Active or voting members with one or another recognised branch of the Church. No one need, therefore, fear any danger to his Church from an Association working in the neighbourhood, but rather hail with delight this new accession to her forces and agencies.

There is another aspect in which this relation between the Church and the Association may be looked at. In and through the Association, the Church is content to lay aside her ecclesiastical robes and forego most of her traditional privileges. The very loftiness of her position and the sacredness of her calling, as the Spouse of her Lord, have a tendency to narrow her sphere of operation and circumscribe her liberty to a great extent. But she has a genuine desire to become "all things to all men, if by any means she may save some." And, inspired by the spirit of Christ, she sends forth her vigorous child with greater liberty, though with less lofty pretensions, like David of old not with the tight-fitting and cumbersome armour of traditional dogmas, but with the sling and stone of cardinal truth, sufficient to inflict a fatal wound in the giants's brow. Yes, the Association is quite free. It rejoices in its freedom. It knows nothing of the various divisions into which the Church is split up. It knows but one name,—the one "name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved"—the name it bears as the most distinctive feature in its designation. And, consequently, its popularity is great. Men who would not enter a Church, because of certain prejudices they unreasonably entertain towards the sect to which that Church may belong, would gladly take their seat in the rooms of the Association. Even sceptics and scoffers of religion will not refuse to enter its portals; they see so little of ecclesiasticism in its operations. Thus by a wise change of front, which the Church

cannot assume, but which the Association can easily accomplish, the influence of the Church is illimitably widened; and men who are beyond the reach of the pulpit and the pew are brought within the pale of Christian influence before they are even aware of it. The very names are changed and rendered attractive. The pulpit becomes a desk; a sermon is called an address, or a lecture; divine service is a Gospel meeting; church singing is changed into a song-service. In fact, the Association adopts every legitimate means its ingenuity can invent or its enthusiasm can devise, in order to please, profit and persuade a young man to seek the true source of lasting good. And the moment he is led to repent, confess and believe in the Lord Jesus, the work of the Association assumes a new phase. A soul has been won, and there is rejoicing among the angels in heaven; the converted soul, who has hitherto been a passive recipient, now longs to become an active worker. But in order to this, the Association tells him he must join a higher body, into whose keeping the Saviour has bequeathed His legacy; he forthwith attaches himself to that branch of the Church which best suits his tastes and mental endowments, and ere long enters on his duties as an Active Member of the Association. All honor, then, to the Church for the heavenly wisdom she has evinced in her anxiety to reach those who are ordinarily inaccessible to the best endeavours of her ministers.

In dwelling on the relation between the Church and the Association, one important service which the latter is unconsciously rendering to the former ought not to be forgotten. The Association is helping on and bringing about the union of the various branches of the Church. The platform of the Association, as already explained, is Catholic in the strictest sense of that term. From the extreme ritualist to the unconventional Plymouth Brother—all can stand on the Association platform. Men who cannot and dare not meet in churches and chapels, or exchange pulpits and services, can sit side by side,

sing together, testify and even preach on the broad platform of the Association. The great good done by the Association is not so much to extinguish the Christian sects, as to bring into constant brotherly intercourse members of different denominations. No sensible person would desire the former. The Church cannot but have branches. Divisions in the Church, based on textual interpretation or varying views of ecclesiastical government, seem inevitable. All sound philosophy revolts against the thralldom of reason. But the infirmity of human nature has converted these natural lines of demarcation into artificial and impassable barriers. It is here that the Association steps forth in the providence of God and renders invaluable service to the cause of brotherhood. Far more than the Bible Society and the Tract Society, which confine their operations to the publication of Scriptures and books, the Young Men's Christian Association enlists in her cause the services of ministers and members of every branch of the Church, and makes them coöperate for the salvation of young men. They are made to forget their accidentals in working together for the essentials. Daily contact ripens into fraternal intercourse; and intercourse merges into friendship. And is not this a most laudable object to pursue in these days of blind and bitter sectarianism? A reflex influence also follows, when day by day as the broad and catholic spirit of the Association is imbibed, it leaves its trace on the various ministrations of the Church and effectually checks any tendency there may be to deviate from the substance to the shadow.

But the Association does more in this direction. The young men who now constitute the Association and carry on its active work will one day be the pastors and pillars of their respective Churches—yea, leaders of every great and good work in their communities. To them, therefore, far more than to the older members, the Association proves itself an excellent training school for unity of spirit and feeling of brotherly love. The next generation of pastors and preachers is sure to entertain

advanced and liberal views regarding ecclesiastical courtesies and friendly intercourse between ministers of different denominations. In this most desirable work, therefore, of bringing together the leaders and members of the various sects—a want that is sorely felt by all her earnest sons—the Church could not have secured to herself the services of a more powerful and faithful auxiliary than the Young Men's Christian Association.

On India let our eyes rest a while. It is here more than anywhere else, that the Association has a prominent part to perform in gathering together the forces of Christianity—more than in any other countries, in Europe or America. India suffers from caste-feeling and race-feeling as well as sect-feeling. It is, therefore, with the greatest delight we hail the advent of the Indian National Union of Young Men's Christian Associations. It is only by a persistent policy of Christocentric effort on the part of this Union, that "every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall become straight and the rough ways smooth ; and all flesh shall see the Salvation of God." The success of the Union, as well as of each individual Association, will depend on the degree in which they are animated by the spirit of Christ. And if this spirit is coveted and maintained, the union will have the rare privilege of preparing the way for, and shaping the destinies of, the future Indian Church, to which many an anxious heart is looking forward with a trembling hope.

If it is true that in Europe and America the formation of an Association is a matter of economy, where a single Church, or two, cannot adequately cater to the wants of the young men, it is still more true in India, where the Churches are for the most part poor and small. But, however poor and weak, the Church's duty is clear. She must be aggressive, not merely conservative. Self-propagation is self-preservation. The principle applies as much to the Church as to the human race, and

how does the Church try to discharge her duty? She does this by associating together a number of young men from different branches located more or less in the same neighbourhood. This, is economy such as becometh the Spouse of the Lord. In this way, the Indian Church ought to have, if she has not already, a good strong Association in every city and in every municipal town of India.

While dwelling on the relation between Church and Association in India, it must not be forgotten that both have to contend with the difficulties of race and language. In this conflict, however, the Association seems to have got the better of it. Even within the denominational divisions of the Church, we find sub-divisions based on language and nationality. Not so, however, with the Association. It draws no line between race and race, and knows no distinction between East and West. Such policy is no small profit in a conquered country like India, where race-feeling is strong, and mutual prejudices still stronger. By bringing the pick and flower of Indian and Western young men into constant contact—which is not done otherwise, except on rare occasions—the Association is rendering a service to the Government, the value of which can only be duly estimated in decades to come, and a service likewise to the Church, which she will not be slow to recognise as a powerful aid to her development in the near future.

Let us take a brief glance at Church and Association in India, with which of this convention are most intimately concerned. According to the latest returns, there are about 23 lakhs of nominal Christians. Of this number very nearly a million belong to the Protestant Church. And what has this visible Church of a million souls done in the direction of Association work? Very little—nay, shamefully little. There are about 45 Associations (most of which owe their origin to the stimulus given by the Indian National Union), with an aggregate membership of about 2,000 young men. On the other hand, we see rising before our eyes about 40,000 educated men



in India, excluding 300,000 youths who are more or less acquainted with the English language. From these figures, it is evident that the proportion between Church and Association is very, very small—not 1 in 500,—a state of things which brings to light a sad lack of life and zeal for the Lord in the Indian Church ; while it is also evident that, if the increasing number of educated young men are at all to be reached and brought into contact with Christian influence, the 45 Associations must be increased many hundredfold. To secure this additional force, the Church must rise to a man and make one mighty united effort. As it is, cannot each of the 1,226 Active Members of the Indian Associations solemnly resolve, each to add another member or two to his Association and thus increase in a wonderful way the power and resources of Association work in this land? Are there no George Williamses in the Indian Church with fire enough in their hearts to bring together two or three hundred souls in their towns or villages, pray together for a blessing, start at once an aggressive work among their companions, and thus give start to a live Association?

In bringing this imperfect sketch to a close, I cannot help placing before you an Indian emblem which to my mind portrays with great exactness of detail the relation between the Church and the Association. The banyan tree, which has already been referred to, is peculiar to India, and may be seen growing in different parts of the country, especially on the banks of rivers and tanks. The Kabir-bar, one of this species, the largest in the world, still stands, with its 3,000 branches, on the banks of the Nurbadda, in this Presidency ; sprouting from a tiny little seed, the tree grows upwards as if seeking its home in the skies, but spreads its branches on all sides, affording shelter and rest to man, bird and beast, with an enormous trunk displaying every mark of might and invincibility and sustained by roots which are invisible and which botanists say cover a much wider area than the tree itself, going deep down into the earth and drawing their vital sap from perennial

streams; while, suspended from the branches, you may observe numberless tender fibres, turning into rootlets of all sizes and shapes, seeking the soil in downward growth, exposed to all sorts of injury, and yet resisting every attack by twisting and twining themselves with each other and descending in dense hardy groups until they finally attach themselves to the roots of the parent tree, and then continue to widen and thicken till the main trunk is touched, this peculiar process being repeated in every group of rootlets as long as the tree is alive, with the result that the tree is continually increasing in strength and size and in its capacity to afford shelter to the sons of men.

The analogy is clear. The root is the Son of Man with His vitalising forces. The tree is the Church with its innumerable branches. The tender fibres twisting themselves into groups of rootlets, are individual members forming themselves into Associations, which thus proceed from the Church, draw their strength from the same source, enjoy no separate organic existence of their own, but find their highest endeavour and greatest delight in contributing to the growth and solidarity of the Church, while each feeble fibre continues to do its special work in trying to entwine itself with its nearest companions. May then Church and Association flourish like the banyan, blending their lives and beautifying their borders, each in its sphere and each in its way, imparting shelter and rest to all who seek their refreshing shade, ever together and never apart, ever growing and never dying.

### 3. THE BHAGAVAD GITA.\*

The Bhagavad Gita means the "Song of the Adorable One." It is an exquisite poem of 700 slokas, and lies "imbedded like

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a pearl in the Mahabharata." It purports to be a discourse delivered by Krishna in his character as the incarnation of the Supreme Being to his friend Arjuna, who on the morning of the great battle of Kurukshetra, is overcome by compassion and expresses his unwillingness to slay his kinsmen. One Sanjaya is represented as reporting the discourse as well as the incidents of the fight to Dridarashtra, the blind sire of the Kauravas. Krishna was at this time Arjuna's charioteer. In the divine song, however, he succeeds in convincing the hero of the propriety of his conduct as a Kshatriya and spurs him on to fight.

The Gita is a religious-philosophic treatise, carefully composed according to a pre-conceived plan, and consists of 18 chapters, divided into three books of 6 chapters each, with a distinct topic for both chapter and book. I simply mention this circumstance to show that it is most unlikely, if not impossible, to deliver so systematic and philosophic a discourse on a single morning, and that, the morning before an impending sanguinary conflict; and still more unlikely, that Sanjaya who is at some distance from the scene could report *verbatim*, as he listens, the whole discourse to Dridarashtra. Enlightened scholars, both in the East and West, are agreed that it is the work of a broad-minded Brahmin philosopher of the Vaishnava sect, who "finding no rest for his spirit in any one system of philosophy, as commonly taught in his own time, much less in the corrupt Brahmanism which surrounded him, was led to make a selection from the various schools of rationalistic and dogmatic thought, so as to construct a composite theory of his own." And to give it unquestioned authority, the author wisely worked it into the Mahabharata manuscript, attributing the whole to the deified Krishna. A worthy place and a divine authorship! For from among the dark recesses of the vast legendary literature, the star of the Gita has shone down the stream of centuries summoning all thoughtful Hindus to a higher faith and a nobler cult.

The date of the Gita is variously conjectured. Mr. Telang places it as early as the second century B. C. and groups the poem with the Upanishads. But from references to the Yavanas and other internal evidences bearing on Philology, eminent orientalists fix it as late as the second century, A. D., which seems the more correct conclusion. It is clear that the author was an ardent follower of the Krishna cult which belongs to the Puranic age.

To us, however, it is not so much the date or the author as the teaching and influence of the Gita that is most essential. At the present time, the Gita is the most highly prized of the Hindu Scriptures. "Since it fell from the Divine lips of Sri Krishna on the field of battle," writes Mrs. Besant who is doing so much to renovate Hinduism, "and stilled the surging emotions of his disciple and friend, how many troubled hearts has it quieted and strengthened, how many weary souls has it led to his feet." It is the educated Hindu's gospel. In the midst of much that is crumbling away before the onslaught of rational criticism, the Gita is his only consolation, the solitary rock on which he can take his stand. Once there, he considers himself quite safe and impregnable and capable of meeting every opponent and combating every antagonistic school of thought and belief. For to quote the words of Professor Monier Williams, "with great perspicuity and beauty of language, the author interwove various opinions into one system by taking, so to speak, threads from the Sankhya, Yoga, and Vedanta, as well as from the later theory of Bhakthi or faith in a Supreme Being. With these threads he weaves, as it were, a woof of many coloured hues of thought, which are shot across a stiff warp of stern uncompromising pantheistic doctrines, worthy of the most decided adherent of the Vedanta School." It is therefore no wonder that the Gita is being widely read and discoursed on by educated Hindus and looked upon as the treasury of truth and the way to Salvation.

Since the Gita occupies so high a place in the thoughts of

earnest young men in quest of truth and peace, and exerts so potent an influence on the thought and activity of Hindus as a people, it is desirable that we should make clear to ourselves what its teaching is regarding the vital questions that agitate all thoughtful minds and what message it conveys to anxious doubting, despondent souls; and in so doing we should remember that the main purpose of this philosophic poem is to exalt the duties of one's caste above all other duties and to show that the discharge of those duties is by no means incompatible with the self-mortification and concentration of thought enjoined by the Yoga philosophy, as well as with the deepest devotion to the Supreme Being. In a single lecture, like this, it is neither possible nor necessary to state or to discuss many of the subtleties and distinctions of a purely philosophical nature with which the treatise abounds. We shall confine ourselves solely to the Gita's conceptions of God, Duty, and Salvation.

In the first place, then, the conception of God we gather from the Gita, is the most sublime of all the conceptions to be found in the Hindu scriptures. The author adopts as his theological basis the theistic form of the Sankhya system, which recognises but one Supreme Being, eternal, infinite, omnipresent, all-glorious, the source and maintainer of all things. The Gita represents Him under five different forms:—(1) as *Adhyatman*, or Supreme spirit; (2) as *Adhidaiva*, the Supreme deity in his relation to gods and men; (3) as *Akshara*, the indivisible principle of life; (4) as the *Kshara*, the divisible as manifested in men and things,—a clear approach to the Vedanta; and (5) as *Adhi Yajna*, the lord of sacrifice, and cause of religion, giving rise to the Incarnations, here that of Krishna. It is evident that the author is straining every nerve to reconcile such conflicting theories as the Yoga, Sankhya, and Vedanta with each other, and the whole with the popular conception of Krishna as an Incarnation. Still, it must be admitted that in these views of one Supreme Personal God, unstained by the vices and passions of the mythical deities, the

devout author has soared far above the religious thought of his age. He surpasses even the teaching of the Vedas, for the famous sloka, *Ekam Evadvitiyam*, often interpreted as an expression of monothestic belief, unmistakably asserts that "all that exists or seems to exist is only Brahma." It is a mere negation of matter; not the assertion that there is but one God.

Now the question arises, how did the author arrive at his conception of the one Supreme Being? It must have been derived either from an altogether extraneous source or from his own reasoning and observation. Some Christian scholars are of opinion that the author must have had intercourse with Christians who found their way into India in the first and second centuries. They are confirmed in their belief by the striking similarity of not a few of the utterances of Krishna in the Gita with those of Christ. Though the theory is a plausible one, there are several difficulties in the way of accepting it. The Christians lived in South India, and it is very improbable that the author of the Gita ever came in contact with them. Even if he did, he would have learned far more fundamental facts concerning the Gospel of Christ than his treatise gives evidence of his knowing. There is such a thing as natural religion. By the study of natural phenomena, both in the animate and in the inanimate world, in the world without and the world within, one can rise, as many have done, to a very noble conception of the existence and attributes of the Deity. Our author, in his search after the true and spiritual, may have discovered for himself the ideas to which he gives expression.

But what about the conception itself? It is certainly pure and sublime; but only relatively so. After a careful and continued study of the poem I must say that the conception is neither accurate nor adequate; and by no means beneficial to the seeking soul. The personality of God, though taught and emphasised, is not brought into bold relief. It is not clearly defined, much less absolutely differentiated from everything else.

He is not only all-penetrating but also all-identical. "Earth, water, fire, ether, the heart and also the mind and egoism—these form the eight-fold divisions of my material nature." "I am Indra among the Gods." "I am Vithesa among Yakshas and Rakshasas." "Among Naga snakes I am Ananta." This is a concession to current Pantheism which fatally mars the author's conception of the divine personality. For it leads to the doctrine that anyone and anything may be worshipped, thereby identifying the worship of the Holy One with that of things and men, however foul or abominable.

Then, as to the nature of the Deity, the error is still more obvious. He has a lower as well as a higher, a material as well as a spiritual nature. All that exist, including human souls, have emanated from this lower nature. Forgetting or unable to conceive that the Omnipotent God can create matter out of nothing, the Hindu philosopher makes matter or, more technically, primordial matter, a part of the divine nature. "All this universe is Brahma." The world is his body framed by Himself out of Himself. I who exist, am a part of God, and when I think, will and act, it is not I, but God that thinks, wills and acts. Why should Arjuna devote himself to the Deity, while he is himself the Deity? These are inconsistencies and contradictions into which the author, unwittingly no doubt but inevitably, falls through his hopeless efforts to reconcile his own views with the prevailing philosophy of his age. Such a view of God, it is needless to say, strikes at the very root of human individuality and the consequent responsibility it involves. It effaces all distinction as to person and right, beings and things, cause and effect, virtue and vice.

From the inclusion of a lower nature in the Being of God naturally arises the error of regarding Him as the producer of evil. Evil must be accounted for. There are three *gunas* or modes, *viz.*, Satva, Rajas, and Tamas: in plain English, goodness, passion and darkness. The last named is moral evil, while the second *guna* often leads to it. Whence do these pro-

ceed? Here is the reply : Krishna says, " Know also that the natures which are the qualities of goodness, and those which are of the quality of passion and darkness, are indeed all from me ; I am not in them but they are in me." " By what is a man," asks Arjuna, " constrained to commit offences ? He seemeth as if contrary to his wishes to be impelled by some secret force ?" Krishna replies, " It is desire, it is wrath, born from the quality of passion ; it is insatiable, full of sin ! This is our foe in this world." There can be no clearer assertion of the doctrine that the God of the Gita is the author of evil, not only in the universe, but in every man. This is certainly a blasphemous touch to the already dismal picture the Gita draws of the spotless One.

It must not be forgotten that the features which go to make up the conception of God are mere dry-bones of *shlokas*, words merely put into Krishna's mouth, not a picture drawn from life. But if we endeavour to translate the abstract into the concrete, though for a moment only, we shall behold quite another picture of the deity. The contrast, indeed, is so very striking that a venerable writer states that the " Krishna of the Gita should have appeared for the destruction of the Krishna of the Purana." It is, however, a matter for thankfulness as indicating a rise in the moral tone of educated Hindus that an attempt is now being made to represent as altogether fabulous the story of the Puranic hero-god. Be this as it may, there are those who explain away Krishna's sinful deeds by his own statement : " Actions defile me not, I have no desire for the fruit of action." A Calcutta M. A. has published a little volume called *The Imitation of Sri Krishna*, in the Preface to which he writes as follows : " To our mind virtue and evil being relative terms can never be applied to one who is regarded as the Supreme Being. The Being who is equal in virtue as well as in vice is to us a grander Being than the extremely virtuous man. The great cosmic law (whatever that may mean) can never affect that Being who acts without



*sangam* or attraction. To teach this great lesson practically, Krishna came to the world, and to teach this great lesson *practically*, he treated vice and virtue alike." My earnest prayer is that India may be saved from such deadly error as to think and act, as if there were no difference between God and man, virtue and vice, purity and impurity, Heaven and Hell!

In the whole picture, there is not the least touch from which we might learn anything of God's love and mercy. Love is not so much as predicated of Him throughout the divine song. Saint and sinner are alike to Him. "He receiveth the merit, or sin of none." Absolute indifference rather than pitying love is his chief characteristic. Even in the transfiguration that was vouchsafed to Arjuna,—the mighty form, which was simply the human body multiplied many a thousandfold, was intensely awe-inspiring and repellant, not in the least loves evoking or attractive. "Strike your foes," is the merciless message delivered by that dire form. A worthy message from a worthy vision! But Arjuna trembling and unconsolated in mind, longs for the more humane form. The whole scene reminds one of a local system in which an Indian province is the Universe, a provincial chieftain noted for his sensual exploits is the deity in flesh, who, however, is perfectly indifferent to the welfare of men, to whom virtue and vice are alike and whose subjects are expected to act like mere automata and without the least regard for the fruit of their action both here and hereafter.

To make the Deity still more local and human he is represented as the great caste producer. "The four castes," says Krishna, "are created by me.....Know that I, though actionless and inexhaustible, am the author of them. He" then assigns the duties and qualities of each, which, as a matter of fact are known to be in actual experience not what they are claimed to be. If Krishna "should not work, these worlds would sink in ruin. I should be the cause of caste confusion and should destroy these people. Better is one's own

work though faulty than another's well performed. He who doeth the work prescribed by nature, incurreth no sin."

We shall quote but one more feature to complete the Gita conception of the Supreme. "I will declare to thee," says the Incarnate deity addressing Arjuna, "the time in which when they die, devotees go forth either not to return or return to life. Fire, light, the day-time, the time of the waxing moon, the six months of the northern solstice, they who die in these, knowing Brahma, go to Brahma. Smoke, the night, the time of the waning moon, the six months of the southern solstice. in these the devotee attains only to the lunar light and then returns. For these two ways of light and darkness are deemed to be the eternal ways of the world : by the one, men go on the way in which there is no return ; by the other, they return to life." On this statement the Rev. Mr. Davies, one of the best translators of the Gita, makes the following remark :—"The passage is a curious instance of the grotesque folly which so frequently attends Hindu speculations even of the highest kind." But he thinks it a later Vedantist addition to the original Gita.

The foregoing study of the God-concept afforded by the Gita goes to show that "God never meant that man should scale the heavens by strides of human wisdom." Man by searching cannot find out his Maker. By persistent, prayerful effort the struggling mind may rise to a faint conception of God, such as we have seen in this work, but the inward sense revolts against any features that bring discord and distress into the soul. The moral elevation of a people depends entirely on the purity of its conception of God.

Let us now dwell awhile on the Salvation proclaimed in the Gita. Salvation is a religious term often pronounced but seldom understood. To go to Heaven at death and enjoy a state of peace and bliss, is the popular idea of salvation. It is not incorrect so far as it goes. Man and his Maker, the two great factors in the universe are at discord. Sin is the cause. The

Jivatma is in revolt against the Paramatma. The human will is not in harmony with the divine. There is no peace. A reconciliation is desired by the repentant soul. God meets him half way. The penalty of sin is paid. The rebel soul is pardoned. A new life is awakened. The heart is purified and the will strengthened. Endless progress succeeds and is continued for ever, even beyond the accident of death. This might be called a fuller view of Salvation.

Now what is the Salvation proclaimed by Krishna? "He who has obtained the Brahma state" (*i.e.*, the abandonment of all desires), says Krishna, "and retains it till the hour of death passes on to the Nirvana in Brahma." "He who truly knows my birth and this divine work of mine, comes never more to birth again when he quits the body: he comes to me, Arjuna." "The Yogin thus constantly devout in soul, with heart subdued attains to peace, the Supreme Nirvana that is in me." "He who attains to me knows birth no more." This then is the heaven, or Salvation, Krishna offers to all his devotees. The heaven is indeed a state. In its negative aspect, it is a complete deliverance from the endless succession of births to which the unsaved soul is exposed. In its positive aspect, it is *Nirvana*, literally, blown out; the soul ceases to exist, like a flame blown out. The river is lost in the sea; the spirit is absorbed by Brahma. The Gita's Heaven then is a state in which the mind thinks not, the will wills not, the heart feels not, the memory remembers not, the judgment discriminates not—a perpetual comatose condition in which the consciousness has completely ceased to exist—a total blank—a veritable death of the whole soul. Existence, if nothing else, is itself bliss; and if this is completely wiped out, what scope is there for the further growth and development of the human spirit? Is total extinction, then, you exclaim, the reward of one, who while on earth concentrates his devotion on Krishna? Nothing less, answers the Gita. There are indeed heavens and helis of a minor, temporary nature, like Indra's heaven with all its sen-

sual enjoyments and the lower hells with all their physical horrors ; but the unsaved soul which goes thither will return to life again in this world. Deliverance from this is Hindu Salvation.

Is there any *present* Salvation ? Any foretaste of the bliss of total destruction at death ? There is indeed. Listen to Krishna once more, " Let the Yogi constantly practise devotion, fixed in a secluded spot, alone, with his mind and self subdued, without expectation and without belongings. Fixing his seat firmly in a clean spot, neither high nor low, covered with a cloth, a deer skin and kusa grass. There fixing his heart on one object, restraining his thoughts, senses and actions, seated on that seat, he should practise yoga for the purification of his soul. Holding his body, head and neck even and unmoved, remaining steady, looking at the tip of his nose and not looking around, tranquil in soul, free from anxiety, and adhering to the rules of the Brahmacharis, he should restrain his mind, concentrated on me, and sit down, engaged in devotion, meditation and intent on me. The Yogi, thus constantly devoting his self to abstraction, whose mind is restrained, attaineth peace, the Supreme *Nirvana*, that is in me."

One need not wait till death. This suicidal process is enough to usher in the bliss of *Nirvana*. I ask, is this the sort of Salvation we poor helpless mortals need ? If instead of foolishly suppressing the senses, man uses his instincts and common sense and lets the senses perform their natural functions, is there no higher power to regulate and moderate their exercise ? Is there no help in the hour of trial and temptation ? Is there no remedy for the canker of sin which is preying upon the higher and better qualities of his soul ? Is there no assurance of the pardon of sin, the sense of which is filling every heart with misery and despair ? Is there no new power to enable the will to will only what is good and eschew the evil ? Is there nothing to make life worth living ? Is there no prospect of serene peace and unsullied joy to the human soul ? Is there no knowledge to make the

mind take a lively interest in life and all the "pairs of opposites" which are incidental thereto and utilize both joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, adversity and prosperity, health and sickness, and the like, for the discipline and development of the soul along higher spiritual planes? Is there no chance of the soul abiding in the supreme Spirit and yet not losing its individuality and existence both now and hereafter? Is there not a real *avatar* of God for the destruction of the evil and the re-establishment of righteousness? None whatever, in the system of the Gita. Destruction now or hereafter is the only salvation the Gita has to offer to every devout soul—a salvation by the universal adoption of which the human race would soon become extinct—a contingency which the Gita fully foresees and provides for, by another emanation of souls and material things from the lower nature of the deity.

Let us now consider the methods by which our author makes this unique salvation available for the human soul. He is an eclectic philosopher. Possessing in abundance the oriental touch of giving offence to none, even at the expense of truth or justice, our broad-minded philosopher is endeavouring his best to harmonise the various methods of salvation current in his age. To begin with, there was Patanjali's Yoga with its peculiar fascination for men of a phlegmatic, despondent turn of mind. There was next the system of Kapila, called the Sankhya, who taught that the soul gained an eternal deliverance from matter by gaining a knowledge of itself, in knowing both soul and matter. There was also the rising Vedantist school, identifying the universe with the Supreme Being and pronouncing everything visible an unreal illusion. There was again the popular worship of Krishna demanding Bhakti in the deified hero. The wise author had also in his mind the matter-of-fact ways of the masses, with whom action is everything, and thought nothing. The powerful system of caste against which outrages were constantly occurring, was also a factor to be reckoned with. Though decidedly original and independent, the author is determined

to work the various phases of philosophy and popular belief and thought into his manifold scheme of salvation. In this attempt he has succeeded but too much, so to say. He blows hot and cold in the same breath. To obtain Nirvana, Yoga is necessary, knowledge is necessary, action is necessary, separation of castes is necessary, devotion to Krishna is necessary, sacrifice is necessary. He has, however, an evident predilection for Patanjali and thus frequently asserts that Yoga is far superior to any other method of salvation. But with his keen insight, he perceived that without action, the maintenance of life and of society would be impossible. And thus he sanctions action or *Karma Yoga*. He is a Brahman, and naturally inculcates the divine origin of caste ; a Vaishnavite, and he identifies the chief of Dwaraka with the Supreme Being, whom, to please the Vedantists, he occasionally makes impersonal and arbitrary. As a natural result of flattering so many various views and theories, the treatise abounds in contradictions and inconsistencies. Even after repeated and careful perusal of the Gita, one must feel that no abiding, soul-satisfying impression is made on the reader, except perhaps that of the musical cadence of the verses.

As a plan of salvation we have already referred to Yoga. It is so utterly impracticable, so contrary to the laws of life and health, that merely to state it is to refute it, as a means of saving knowledge. The next plan is *knowledge* whereby after much thought and introspection, one is alleged to come to the conclusion that one is the Almighty Himself—a blasphemous utterance striking at the very root of individual existence and personal responsibility. The author was not particularly partial to Vedic ritual and sacrifice, nor was he in favour of the Vedantic cult transferring all agency to the Deity. He struck a course for himself and propounded, in addition to Yoga, a system of salvation by works. "Apply thyself," says Krishna, "to work that ought to be done, but always *without attachment*, for the man who applies himself to work without attachment attains to the Supreme." To the masses, action without

attachment, and to the philosopher, Yoga—this is the plan of salvation according to the Gita. To act without attachment is to act without motive or purpose, to experience in the act itself, neither pain nor pleasure, and to think nothing whatever of its future or results. Action, then, without the three concomitants of motive, feeling, and effect, is action without attachment. Men are to be mere animals or living automata, acting as they are moved by instinct. The moment that any one of these attachments is formed, the action becomes sinful. For a rational being, such as man is, it is utterly impossible to act without attachment so called, unless he becomes mad or delirious. The moral element, not to speak of the physical, would be utterly wanting in it; no such action would be possible. How was Arjuna as a human being and a kinsman to dismiss all feelings of pity and mercy for the foes against whom he was aiming his deadly darts? Action without attachment is a convenient loophole for the commission of any crime, however horrible or foul. The murderer of Mr. Rand walked up to the gallows with the Gita in his hand. I am afraid this is the most poisonous doctrine in the book. It lays the axe at the root of the tree of morality. No wonder, the Hindus do not really believe in what is called sin. The Indian term for sin is said to be originally connected with "birth." To be rid of sin is to be rid of "birth." At all events, the only sin that I can trace in the Gita is the violation or non-performance of caste rules. As action with attachment involves such violations, and as the senses are the causes and means of such violations, the total suppression of the senses is aimed at as the only available remedy. Poor senses! The abuse and misuse of them by a responsible agent is confounded with their natural, legitimate use. And as total suppression is out of the question, at least for the great majority, the unaided human intellect invented the moral fiction of "action without attachment," and for ever destroyed the eternal distinction between right and wrong, virtue and

vice. Our Calcutta M. A. has once for all explained this peculiar doctrine of the Gita. "Conceive a man," says he, "who is trying his utmost to fly from vice to its opposite pole, virtue; imagine also a being to whom heat and cold, virtue and vice, are the same; and you will find that the latter is *infinitely* superior to the former." Sin, as the opposition of the human will to the divine, carrying in its train evils of an everlasting nature, is nowhere referred to in the Gita; and, as a natural result, salvation, properly so called, as the deliverance from sin and its consequences, is not even so much as hinted at by the author.

Neither is there any emphasis laid on duty properly so called. To duty to God, the Gita is a perfect stranger, unless thinking on him during Yoga may be so construed. The only duties the Gita recognises are the rites and avocations of one's caste. Arjuna's duty was to fight and slay. Hindu society as now constituted is only a huge system of caste, in which caste and religion are synonymous terms; while the sacred word, duty, what ought to be done to both God and man from a sense of unselfish love, has been replaced by the rules of caste, which have their origin in falsehood, are nourished by selfishness, and are a hindrance to freedom, progress and brotherliness.

Devotion to God in the form of Krishna is another means of salvation. The devotion that is demanded is of the intensest and most absolute nature. Now it is only love that can beget love. What was the price the Avatar paid for Arjuna's love? He urged him to fight and gave him an idea of his mighty majestic form. Spiritually, he perplexed his mind by placing before him half-a-dozen methods of salvation, whereby he could enter into his essence, lose his self-consciousness and become a complete nonentity. What was there lovable, inspiring and worthy of intense devotion in all these? Even the Calcutta M.A., with all his admiration for the lilas of the god, which he terms "actions without attachment," represents him merely as a grand and superior being, and not as a loving and lovable



person. How many educated Hindus would willingly lay down their lives for Krishna at this moment? On the other hand, Krishna himself inculcates the self-evident truth that Bhakti makes the votary similar in character to his God. Evidence of this is in abundance wherever the Krishna cult is practised. But human nature is better than human creeds; for if the devotion to Krishna were intense and universal, Indian Society would become an awful spectacle to behold.

Lastly, what has the Gita done for our country? What is the influence exerted by this most popular work on the religion and character of the Hindus? In a dark and comparatively unenlightened age, when polytheism prevailed everywhere and pantheism was poisoning the mind against piety and virtue, the author did well to summon his countrymen away from corrupt ritualism and carnal idolatry to a more spiritual worship of the Supreme Being. He did well, indeed, to perpetuate the comparative purity of Society in his days by emphasising the sacred separation of caste. And he did well to harmonise the conflicting philosophies of his age and make thoughtful men view them all as if they were different sides of the same cube. But apart from all this, what is the sum total of the good influence the Gita has exerted upon the people during the last 1,700 years? That it is eagerly read and that its doctrines are more or less universally known, there is not the slightest doubt. They have filtered down even to the illiterate masses. The man in the street asks me "Where is the sin you speak of? It is He who is within me who does all my actions." With an influence so stupendous, what has the Gita achieved in the moral and social world? Has it abolished idolatry and all its attendant immoralities? Has it anywhere established the spiritual worship of the one Supreme Being? Have its doctrines dismissed all other gods from the Hindu pantheon? Has it elevated the character of the people and spread more correct ideas of purity and morality? Has it placed a lofty ideal of divine holiness and love before the nation? Has it

even supplied a motive for purity and benevolence? What can the philosophy of the Gita achieve, when it makes the thoughtful few retire into solitude and suppress all their senses as well as thoughts, and the thoughtless millions to act away without attachment? By promulgating the poisonous formula of "action without attachment," it has taken away the sting out of sin, and given a deathblow to conscience. Piety and practice, Bhakti and character, have for ever been divorced. People of pronounced piety, according to the Gita, lead a life which even ordinary society cannot for a moment tolerate. Mrs. Besant, brought up in a purely Christian atmosphere in the impressive days of childhood, does indeed read a Christian spirit into the enigmas of the Gita and assert that "Moderation is its key-note." But to the Hindu student, or for that matter, to any unbiassed reader, the Gita points out two extreme poles, one of complete suppression and the other of unbridled license, between which he is to swing backwards and forwards.

As the best prized book of the Hindu scriptures, and as the last resort and refuge of the educated Indian, it deserves careful perusal. For, in the eloquent words of Lord Macaulay, the honest student will find that the "ancient philosophy disdained to be useful and was contented to be stationary. It dealt in attempts to solve insoluble enigmas; in exhortations to the attainment of unattainable frames of mind. The same sects were still battling with the same unsatisfactory arguments, about the same interminable questions. Words and mere words, and nothing but words, had been all the fruit of all the toil of all the most renowned sages of sixty generations. The ancient philosophers promised what was impracticable; they despised what was practicable; they filled the world with long words; and they left it as wicked and ignorant as they found it."

India is yet to be a battle-field. Another battle will soon be fought, sharper and more sanguinary than that of Kurukshetra. The Gita and the Gospel have entered the lists. The battle

hardly yet begun, will, no doubt, be long and arduous. The throne of the Indian soul is the prize each strives to win. The Gita, taking its source in human speculation, flows on with defective conceptions of God, duty and worship, and in its onward destructive course sweeping away even the last traces of conscience and purity, offers to the weary, thirsty, sin-stricken soul, its complete annihilation as the summum bonum of life. The Gospel, springing from the bosom of God in the Heavens, carrying grace and truth in its life-giving waters, flows gently among the plains of India, making the desert bloom and the wilderness rejoice, and leads the soul to an ever-progressing life in the presence of God. The Gita proclaims a local but awe-inspiring deity. The Gospel reveals a universal but holy and loving Father. The Gita ignores sin in its essence, and skips over its guilt and penalty; the Gospel gives it its right place in the moral world, and offers a crucified Saviour as its only remedy. The Gita preaches deliverance from birth; the Gospel preaches deliverance from indwelling sin. The Gita places for our imitation a warrior chieftain with more than the average faults and foibles of a human being; the Gospel, a loving, self-sacrificing perfect life, the constant inspiration of all that is best and purest in the world. The Gita asserts loyalty to the rules of caste as one's highest duty; the Gospel takes a far loftier plane and pronounces the love of God, the standard of one's conduct under all circumstances. The Gita insists on the suppression of the senses and even thought; the Gospel enjoins their legitimate use, but only condemns their abuse. The Gita is philosophy from beginning to end; the Gospel is life, lived and endured for the sake of the whole race. The Gita was only meant for the education of a few in a certain part of India; the Gospel is for all races of men throughout the world. Though both are nearly of the same age, the Gita is still confined within the bounds of India, while the Gospel with its marvellous self-propagating, transforming power, and genial, benevolent influence, is rapidly encircling

the globe. It is left to India to choose whether she will retain her Gita or receive the Gospel.

### A DISCUSSION ON THE ABOVE.

To

THE EDITOR OF THE "CHRISTIAN COLLEGE MAGAZINE."

SIR,

To your widely read journal the Reverend Mr. Lazarus has contributed two articles on the Gita. Please permit me to make the following reply.

(1) Because there is a distinct topic for each chapter in the Gita and there is a systematic plan, Mr. Lazarus says that "it is most unlikely, if not impossible, to deliver" it in a single morning. If Sree Krishna is a Divine Avatara, there is nothing impossible or unlikely in this. Sanjaya was given clairvoyant and clairaudient powers by Sree Veda Vyasa and hence Sanjaya's hearing and seeing what took place on the battlefield are not "still more unlikely." As to "enlightened scholars both in the East and West" being agreed that it is the forgery of a Vaishnava Brahmin, interpolated into the Mahabharata, it is merely begging the question to imply that those scholars who do not agree with Mr. Lazarus do not deserve the name "enlightened." His enlightened Western scholars ignore tradition. Many also of the earlier Indian scholars, blinded by the glamour of the materialistic spirit of the nineteenth century and fearing that they might be considered superstitious and not enlightened, obediently followed the Western scholars. Even Messrs. Telang, Tilak, Rajendra Lal Mitra, Ranade, M. M. Kunte and R. C. Dutt fell under the misleading influence. The theory that religious revelations are the forgeries of great men who are yet admitted to be devout and "broad-minded philosophers" is one of the most curious products of human conceit. Sree Sankaracharya who lived in

the sixth century B. C. has commented on the Gita. All the Bhashyas on the Sareeraka Sutras (including that of Sree Neelakanta) quote the Gita as a Smriti. And yet the Gita (which is one of the three Prasthanas or foundation works of Hinduism) was forged by an anonymous author in the second century B. C. (according to Telang) and in the second century A. D. (according to other eminent orientalists), and most miraculous of all, this forgery of a Vaishnava Brahmin was at once accepted by every Hindu sect, including bigoted Saivites, throughout this continent. I thank God that present day Hindu scholars have almost escaped the infection of the original fantastic theories.

(2) Mr. Lazarus says "The personality of God" (in the Gita) "is not absolutely differentiated from everything else." In the ninth chapter, the Blessed Lord says, "All beings have root in me. I have not root in them. The support of beings, yet not rooted in beings" and in the eleventh chapter, Arjuna says, "Thou holdest all, therefore Thyself art all." Mr. Lazarus himself in another place quotes the Gita verse "I am not in them" (the three gunas which create the universe in God) "but they are in Me." The Bible says "In Him we live and move and have our being." God the father is ultimately "all in all," yet He cannot be separated as a Unity in Trinity from the Son and the Holy Ghost. God must be "identical" in essence with His Universe though He is also separate and greater. Is it a sign of enlightenment to see distinctions where none exist in order to condemn religions other than the one a person was born in or has adopted? Truth has many aspects, and a tendency to see differences instead of unity might lead to our ignoring and even misunderstanding the truths of our own religion and, in my opinion is a blasphemy of, and is a sin against, the Holy Ghost.

(3) Mr. Lazarus takes credit to himself for being able "to conceive that the omnipotent God can create matter out of nothing." I do not grudge him the credit. Is God's Divine

Idea of Creation which preceded His creation "nothing?" Is His "word" which was in the beginning "nothing?" Of course, it is nothing according to materialistic conceptions. But according to philosophic conceptions, Ideas, Will and Word are "things" of utmost importance and not "nothing." To create out of nothing is a self-contradictory proposition like the statement that two and two make five. The Supreme is, no doubt, omnipotent, but His own Divine Law which is His Will is not an absurd self-contradictory chaos but a beautiful harmonious Word. The Revd. Mr. Lazarus cannot understand how, when a man acts, God could be said to act and he thinks it inconsistency and contradiction. But the Bible says that not even a sparrow worth the fraction of a farthing falls without God's will. St. Paul preaches that we should so think, will and act that the Lord Jesus might think, will and act in us. Why should Mr. Lazarus see contradictions, effacements of distinction between right and wrong, striking at the very root of human individuality and responsibility, only in one set of teachings and not in the other? The statistics of crimes in different countries do not disclose that the Gita has made people of this country more criminal and immoral, as Mr. Lazarus opines.

(4) Coming to the "Problem of Evil," Mr. Lazarus thinks that if the Gunas come from God and one of the Gunas is the cause of Evil, God becomes the cause of Evil and it is a blasphemy to say so. I suppose if we alter the words and say that Satan is able, *by permission of God*, to thwart the Will of God and create Evil, it is not blasphemy of God's omnipotence and omnipresence. Vain fight about words! Can we not agree to see the same truths in different words and forms and cease to fight about forms and words? Is it not strange that the Reverend Mr. Lazarus thinks that the Gita makes no distinction between Good and Evil though he himself quotes a passage in the third chapter which exhorts Arjuna to fight against Sin and Evil as our implacable enemy? As regards

practical moral conduct, the Gita insists and wearisomely repeats that we should fight, fight, fight against Evil. It does not, however, ignore that God's omnipenetrativeness pervades Evil also. Can we not learn to *fight* without hate and fear? May not God's All-embracing Love redeem the Great Adversary Satan himself as it redeemed Ravana in the Lord's own good time? Though the Lord's ways are mysterious, can we not darkly see that what is called Evil is permitted for our ultimate good and for strengthening our free will in the fight against it? Satan cannot but be an instrument of the omnipotent God (see Book of Job).

(5) Evil is only a passing phase (so far as each particular soul is concerned) necessary (in God's gracious Providence) for the evolution of men's higher natures.

(6) When we see two apparently inconsistent passages in religious works, may it not be that the apparent contradiction is the result of our not seeing a higher Truth which will throw light on and unify and reconcile both passages?

(7) I must refuse to notice at length the puerile insinuations that "the Sree Krishna of the Gita cannot be the Sree Krishna of the Puranas," &c. In the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the Gita, the Blessed Lord makes the greatest possible difference "between God and man, virtue and vice, purity and impurity, heaven and hell" though He recognizes the Absolute Atma in the most vicious man. But the virtuous man is specially dear to the Lord. He says (seventh chapter) that four kinds of devotees are dear to His heart; even of these four, the Wise man whose whole mind is set upon the Lord as the Supreme Good is the dearest, like the Lord's own Self.

(8) "Love is not so much as predicated of Him (God) throughout the Divine song, Saint and Sinner are alike to Him." Thus says Mr. Lazarus who has studied the Gita! The Lord says in the fifth chapter (end) "Having known Me as the Lover of all beings, he goeth to Peace." In the ninth

chapter, the Lord speaks of Himself as "Father, mother, husband and Lover" of all. The twelfth chapter is wholly devoted to Love. Love, compassion and harmlessness are some of the Daivee Sampath qualities which Arjuna has (sixteenth chapter) and which make Him God's friend (eighteenth chapter) fit to hear holy truths. In the sixth chapter, He says, "He who feels the pains and pleasures of all as if they were his own pleasures and pains is the greatest yogee." I don't know the Love which could be stronger than that of father, mother, husband, friend, lover and one's own self combined.

(9) The Divine manifestation shown to Arjuna after opening his inner eye is ridiculed by the Reverend Mr. Lazarus. It is, no doubt awe-inspiring to us of weak minds. The prophet Moses could not see the blazing face of the Lord Jehovah the dazzling light which blinds (compare Milton). In the Old Testament, the Lord counsels the Jews to fight as a duty for the Lord's Glory. The Reverend Mr. Lazarus seems to have read some Atheistical writings which state that the Lord Jehovah was a petty cruel tribal chieftain to whom his glory was superior to virtue and vice, who revels in the sweet savour of the blood of tender sheep and lambs and even human beings and so on. What the Reverend Mr. Lazarus has so read, he applies to the glorious vision shown to Arjuna's inner sight.

(10) Mr. Lazarus (like the Reverend Mr. Davies and many another "eminent" orientalist) cannot understand the two paths described in the eighth chapter and hence, of course it is all "grotesque folly" or a later forgery. The mysteries of yoga are not revealed except to initiates. Lord Jesus says "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." We are like Fourth Form boys who, not being able to understand the sines and roots and functions in a high mathematical treatise, call it all "grotesque nonsense."

(11) The Gita does not proclaim extinction to be salvation as Mr. Lazarus states. He trots out the exploded fallacy that



Nirvana means "blowing out or extinction." It means Freedom from bondage," "from birth and deaths *caused by Karma.*" The Blessed Lord Himself "is born through my own Maya for the protection of the good and for the destruction of the evil-doers." Christ, the eternal unborn Word, is also born. Births and Deaths by *Karma* are extinct for the liberated soul, but not births and deaths incurred out of His own Free Will for saving the world. Hence, the Lord is careful to say (chapters 3, 4, 7, 11 and 18) that salvation means "becoming of the same nature as" the Lord, who is the highest Willer, Feeler, Thinker, Rememberer, Discriminator and the Unifier and not an extinct zero. He remembers His past births though Arjuna does not. He knows the past, present, and future. So, salvation is *not* extinction of memory and existence but it is loss of Karmic births and deaths and the attainment of Supreme Joy, Power, Existence, Wisdom, Memory and Devotion. A man who has attained Nirvana cannot love or hate and cannot feel pleasure and pain like common men who are led by external extinctions and material desires. The man on the Nirvanic Plane loves with a steady deep love all his brother beings and it is a Love beyond the three Gunas.

(12) Mr. Lazarus's treatment of the doctrine of "work without attachment" surpasses in grotesqueness his other theories as to the Gita's teachings. The word "*Karma*" besides its ordinary meaning has a technical meaning and then it is distinguished from "*Vikarma*" and "*Akarma*" (see fourth chapter). It is not sinful work without attachment that is preached but Dharma—ordained work. It is preached from almost every Christian pulpit that you should do your duty in the station in which God has placed you and leave the result to the Lord saying "Thy will be done and not mine." This doctrine so beautifully elaborated in the Gita is denounced by Mr. Lazarus as "giving a convenient loophole for the commission of any crime, however horrible or foul."

(13) Mr. Lazarus says "sin as the opposition of the human will to the Divine, carrying in its train evils of an everlasting nature is nowhere referred to in the Gita and as a natural result, salvation as the deliverance from sin is not so much as hinted at" in the Gita. The whole of the sixteenth chapter except the opening few lines is directed to show the nature of sin and sinful men who hate the Lord and set themselves up against Him and consider themselves as more righteous and religious than others through pride and egotism and who "sink into the lowest depths" in consequence (see last slokas 18 and 20 especially). The very essence of every chapter almost (see last verses in 5th, 6th, 9th, 11th, 12th, &c.) is that salvation is by "contemplation of and devotion to and sacrifice and prostration to the Lord" and the holiest sloka in the whole song says "Come unto me alone for shelter—sorrow not—I will liberate thee from all sins." When the Reverend Mr. Lazarus can ignore such passages, his conclusions cannot be entitled to any weight.

(14) Mr. Lazarus smells the battle-field from afar—like the warhorse. A bloody battle royal is to be fought between the Gita and the Gospel. I dare to prophesy, though the reverend gentleman may be grievously disappointed, that no such battle will ever be fought in this sacred land. Religions are loving sisters and not deadly rivals, though in the name of religion human beings have given vent to their weaknesses, passions and hatreds.

Coimbatore.

T. SADASIVIER.

SIR,

My thanks are due to Mr. Sadasivier for his remarks on my articles on the Gita and for the opportunity thus afforded me of making myself clear on the points emphasized by my critic. If this discussion leads to a more careful and critical as well as

prayerful study of the work by all educated Hindus, I shall not have written in vain.

(1) As regards the genuineness of the work and its date, I think it is safer to leave the controversy in the hands of "present day Hindu Scholars" and men like Telang, Dutt, &c. Mr. Dutt considers the Mahabharata itself a myth, and is of opinion that no such person as Krishna ever existed. To my lay mind, the Gita appears to have assumed its present form after a process of revision and enlargement extending over a comparatively long period.

(2) I do not repeat my statement that the personality of God is not clearly and consistently emphasized throughout the poem. Mr. Sadasivier himself proves my charge when he says that "God must be *identical* in essence with His Universe." I certainly do not wish to "condemn" any religion, for I am trying to bring to light the truths that may be discovered. As against Kapila, the author of the Gita was certainly a monotheist; but the influence of the former was so enormous that the latter at times betrayed a strong bias towards Advaitism. The figure used by St. Paul when he said that "in God we live and move and have our being" does not warrant the conclusion that He and we are identical as stated in 10. 20 and 13. 29, 30.

(3) Mr. Sadasivier plays on the term "nothing" and endeavours to identify the "Divine Idea," "Word" &c., with the Gita's Prakriti or lower nature" of the Supreme Being. Even now the material—not creative—origin of the Universe is a mystery. Kapila made it eternal, while the author of the Gita refines it by incorporating primordial matter (*Avyakta*) into the Divine nature. I cannot understand how Mr. Sadasivier can identify the falling of a sparrow with a deliberate act of the Divine will? God's *permitting* an event to happen is quite different from saying that He is the doer of it. As well might one assume that when a man murders his foe, it is the king who is the murderer. This is another proof of the vagueness of the idea of the Divine personality in the Hindu mind.

(4) "Vain fight about words," indeed! In Mr. Sadasivier's vocabulary "to permit" is "to originate", and not preventing Satan from falling into sin is the same as God causing him to "thwart His will" and fall into sin. It is the erroneous habit of identifying the Divine Being with the human soul that results in this confusion. Arjuna is, to be sure, exhorted to fight against evil, but what evil? His poor senses, dominated by the God-given evil! I admit readily that as in the material, so in the spiritual world, there are inscrutable mysteries, but to venture to say in any form whatever that God is the author of moral evil is to cast a blot on the Divine perfection.

(7) I pass over (5) and (6) with the common answer that it may be possibly so provided that the "Evil" referred to is Physical, and that the "Truth" referred to is actually a Truth, and pass on to (7). I should really like to know who it is that is actually addressing Arjuna throughout the poem. Is it the Divine Being Himself? If so, in what form or through whose voice? Or, are the words communicated to Arjuna through the air like Marconi's wireless telegraphy? If the former, whose is the form, and whose the voice? Is it not Krishna, the kinsman and charioteer of Arjuna, the chief of Dwaraka, who pretended to be asleep when the combatants rushed in as if in a race and stood before him one at the head and the other at his feet? Educated Hindus must clear up this point to their own satisfaction. As to his teaching, whoever the teacher may be, it is full of contradictions. It could not have been otherwise. The author aimed at pleasing every favourite school of thought and at the same time firmly establishing Krishna-*bhakti* (see 7 : 23 ; 8 : 14 ; 9 : 15 ; 16, 18.) Polytheism was the prevalent religion and the author's ardent desire was to make Krishna supreme without, at the same time, offending the popular philosophies. As a natural result, the poem abounds in contradictions. For example, Arjuna is a "sinless" being (14. 6 and 15. 20) like the "Sinless" Krishna, and yet he is to be "liberated from all his sins" (18, 66) ; the Vedas and Vedic ritual are attacked and ridi-

culed (2. 42-45, 3. 45, 9. 20, 11. 53 and the whole of chapter 15) and yet they are occasionally permitted (2. 46) and even praised ; Arjuna is to suppress all desire and all his senses (6. 4, 24) and yet no one may "abandon his natural work" (18. 23, 48) ; he is to work *without attachment* (6-4, 24) and yet to *fight* from fear of "disgrace" (2. 34, 36) and love of "glory" (11. 34) ; God is the "same to all beings ; to Him none is hateful and none is dear" (9. 29) and yet "four kinds of devotees (7-16, &c., one of these is "he who seeks for gain") are dear to Him, the Yogin being the dearest. I could easily multiply such contradictions.

(8) To heap terms of affection on an imaginary Deity cannot make it a *loving* Person. The quality of love—like that of mercy—is not so strained. In the words quoted by Mr. Sadasivier (9. 17) "love" is not the subject of description ; it is the Deity's identity with the Universe that the author is dwelling upon. For that matter, Mr. Sadasivier might have quoted the adjoining verses in the same *charme* in which Krishna identifies, butter, fire, heat, rain, &c. Long bias and knows the Puranic hero too well to attribute anything *unlike* it, self-sacrificing love to him. As for the abstract Deity of the Gita, it is *merely* a cold, lifeless Deism that is presented to the reader. I still ask where is the Divine love in the Gita that could draw the soul to itself like a powerful magnet ? Mr. Sadasivier likes to quote the Bible. Can he say that "God so loved the world (not merely North India) that He gave His only Son (*Krishna*) that whosoever (wicked as well as good) believeth on him should not perish but have eternal *life* (not *absorption*) ?" But Krishna is "born for the *destruction of evil-doers* (4. 8)"

(9) I must repeat that the manifestation granted to Arjuna was after all a poor response to a soul anxious to behold the "Divine Perfections." It was a miniature Universe that Arjuna beheld. The poet's flight of imagination could not transcend his actual experience and he peopled it with the gods, demons, reptiles and the like with which he had been familiar, not forget-

ting of course the "crushed heads" of Arjuna's principal foes in the Deity's "gaping jaws."

(10) If Mr. Sadasivier, unlike the eminent orientalists who are agreed as to the spuriousness of the passage referred to, still believes in it, he must accept my criticism of it and permit me to add that if a matter connected with one's salvation is to be a mystery known only to the initiated, it is not worth its name.

(11) Here is a *Hindu* explanation of *Nirvana*. In Brihadaranyaka it is thus explained:—"It is with us when we enter into the Divine Spirit, as if a lump of salt was thrown into the sea; it becomes dissolved into the water (from which it was produced), and is not to be taken out again." So I have nothing to do with the "trotting out" of this explanation. Mr. Sadasivier tries to escape the difficulty by changing "absorption" into "becoming of the same nature as" the Lord. His statement is true, and yet not true enough. I shall explain it from the Gita itself. Mr. Sadasivier correctly paraphrases *Nirvana* as "Freedom from bondage." But to obtain the full import of this phrase, one should be familiar with the philosophy underlying it. The human *Soul*, which is the eternal portion of the Divine Soul (15. 7), is a pure, bright ethereal substance and quite as eternal as the Supreme Soul (2. 12), but is at birth brought into contact with *Prakriti* or nature, which provides it with self-consciousness (*ahankara*), intellect (*buddhi*), mind (*manas*) and five senses and five sensations which correspond to the five subtle and five gross elements in the world. These are moved to act by the three *gunas*; the soul is an indifferent spectator, but only thus becomes aware of the external world. The essence of sin or bondage is this contact with *prakriti*. By the Yoga process, the contact snaps, re-birth is avoided, and the soul is set free, (freedom from bondage) when it is absorbed into the Supreme soul. Shall I say, it then sleeps the sleep ("supreme repose" 18. 62) that knows no waking?

(12) Mr. Sadasivier ridicules my reading of "work" in "work without attachment" as being grotesque. He should rather turn

his ridicule on Krishna whom "*actions* (not Dharma) defile not," and the M. A. of the Calcutta University whose statement regarding virtue and vice I have already quoted in my lecture. Religious duties (*dharma*) are certainly referred to, but *all actions* are generally included (12. 6, 16 ; 2. 71 ; 18. 49). As a matter of fact, man is *not* responsible for his actions. "Every man is compelled by the *gunas* of nature to *act* even against his will (3. 5). "He who sees that works are wrought in *every case* by Prakriti and that therefore the soul is *not* an agent, sees indeed" (13. 29). Hence the sovereign remedy of acting "without attachment" which only man knows how to avail himself of without restraint or reserve. The Gita knows nothing about doing "your duty in the station in which God has placed you" unless it be one's *caste* duties.

(13) The 16th chapter to which Mr. Sadasivier refers does indeed speak of "divine creatures and asuras—but these "are *born* so"—which fact must not be forgotten ; while the 17th chapter introduces another classification namely :—"good" men who worship the Devas ; men of 'passion,' the Yakshas and of Rakshasas ; men of 'darkness,' the hosts of Pretas and Bhūtas. Men are 'good,' 'passionate, or 'dark, or mixtures of the three *gunas* according to the "*gunas* prevailing in their natures (18. 41), while "no man may abandon his natural work, even though evil" (18. 48). I do not deny, on the other hand, that the author of the Gita, as a faithful observer of human nature, enumerates a few good qualities intermingled with a few doubtful and impossible ones, but he nowhere explains the *true nature* of sin or how one may be saved from its guilt and power. The "holiest sloka in the whole Song : 'Come unto me for shelter—sorrow not—I will liberate thee from all sins" reads very well on paper ; but its true meaning can only be discovered by reading the whole verse of which it is a part. It is 18. 66 and reads thus : "*Forsaking all religious duties*, come to me as the only refuge, I will liberate thee from all thy sins ; grieve not." Any person of ordinary intelligence will see that the "sins" here spoken

of are the non-performance of one's "religious duties." The great point with the author is Krishna-worship by Yoga as against Vedic ritual.

(14) Mr. Sadasivier has already falsified his own prediction by himself beginning the battle in these pages. But this is only a prelude to the war which is yet to be waged. Error, whether in religion or science, must be generously indicated. To me, however, it is a matter for deep thankfulness to God that in this as in other discussions, earnest men like Mr. Sadasivier are beginning to appeal to the Bible as the ultimate criterion of religious truth.

(15) To sum up the ideals taught and enforced in the Gita, every *sincere* admirer of it must forthwith resign his situation (18. 42-44), "renounce every enterprise" (12. 16), "abandon absolutely all desires" (6. 24), "restrain from the beginning all his senses" (3. 41), "abandon wife and home" (12. 19), "wholly cease to think" (6. 25), and yet "meditate" on the charioteer of Arjuna as the Supreme Being, and "sit unmoved in silent meditation" (18. 52), till he "obtains, by his grace, supreme repose, the eternal seat" (18. 62).

*Madras, March 29th.*

J. LAZARUS.

#### 4. THE MYSTERY OF SIN AND ITS SOLUTION.

We regard sin as a mystery, first because its origin has always been a subject of speculation among men, next, because a great deal of ignorance prevails regarding the true nature of sin, and lastly, because the world has ever sought in vain to discover a remedy for its removal. That sin exists in the world no honest man denies. The traditions of almost all nations point to a period when sin found no place on the earth. The golden age of Europe, the Krita-yuga of the Aryans, and similar traditions among other nations, are obscure recollections of a time when primeval man led a sinless life on earth—



of a season of innocence, purity, and unsullied joy when man held free and full communion with his Maker.

Whence came sin then? And why? How did it enter this beautiful world? Why did God permit it? Very proper questions these. But, strange to say, these are usually addressed to Christians only, as if they were specially responsible for the entrance of sin into the world. Those who deny the existence of God and, therefore, of sin, as the term is commonly understood, may very properly ask these questions with a view to turn religion into ridicule. But Hindus, to whom the terms God, soul, sin, and salvation, are of vital importance, should rather seek to answer than ask questions regarding the mystery of moral evil. For, as regards sin, all classes of religious persons stand on a common platform. However much we may differ as to our views of the mystery, we have to face the fact of sin in one form or another all the days of our life. We see it in society and mark it in individuals; it rules the monarch on his throne, and spares not the beggar on the dunghill; it asserts its power on the babe and relaxes not its hold on the aged; it taints wisdom with its poison and clothes ignorance with superstition; it blights the corn before it ripens and the tree before it blossoms; it sets man against man, brute against brute, and all against one another; it destroys harmony in the soul and fills it with sorrow, and the darkness of despair; it strikes the body with disease and renders it a willing instrument of unrighteousness; in short, it breeds anarchy in the world and breathes death and decay on all.

What then is the origin of so formidable a foe? Almost all religious and philosophical systems endeavour to account for the advent of sin in the world. Some ascribe sin to a power co-equal and co-eternal with God, whose essence is evil as the essence of God is goodness. What does Hinduism say on the subject? At the outset, however, it is difficult to say what Hinduism itself is. For, as Monier Williams puts it, "Hinduism

is a complex congeries of creeds and doctrines which in its gradual accumulation may be compared to the gathering together of the mighty volume of the Ganges; swollen by a continual influx of tributary rivers and rivulets spreading itself over an ever-increasing area of country and finally resolving itself into an intricate Delta of tortuous streams and jungly marshes." Still, from this mass of heterogeneous elements may be gathered at least half-a-dozen theories as to the origin of sin. In the first place, the mere contact of soul and body is said to have originated sin. In other words, the soul itself was sinless, but when the Creator clothed it in flesh and circumscribed it with the conditions of a corporeal existence, sin was engendered. So that when the soul "shuffles off this mortal coil," there is an end of all sin. The founder of Buddhism seems to have inclined to this belief. It is true that sinful thoughts and actions are often occasioned by the five senses, but there are many, and more serious and lasting sins, which spring from the soul itself and have their habitation there, independently of all connection with the animal nature of man. Such sins as envy, malice, anger, pride, revenge, hatred, an habitual aversion for God and whatever is good and pure, and unbelief, spring into existence in the hidden depths of the soul and are only noticed when they pour out like lava from the crater of a volcano.

According to Pantheism there is no such thing as sin. Man and God being one and the same, and the Universe, an illusory garb of the impersonal God, all that man does, whether evil or good, has no ethical value. Such terms as right and wrong are merely relative and vary with the notions of society at different times and in different parts of the world. Thus sin as such is banished from the Pantheistic school of thought.

Another Hindu theory accounts for the origin of sin by stating that when a giant carried off the Veda from its place of safe custody, sin entered the world. This is a very fanciful

theory. But it strikes me that there is in it some remote allusion to the fruit of the forbidden tree and the unlawful taste of it by Adam. 'Veda' means 'knowledge,' and just this was the name of the tree. And the Devil may have been the giant referred to, at whose instigation Adam practically stole the fruit. There is yet another theory which makes God the author of sin. Surely, this is speculation at its worst. Failing to discover in existing traditions something to account for the introduction of evil into the world, some ingenious Hindu Philosopher has probably thought it best to solve the mystery by ascribing it to God. And closely allied to this is the teaching which represents God, soul, and sin as alike eternal and independent of one another—a doctrine which degrades God from his throne, makes the soul a God and deprives sin of its ethical nature. A simpler Catechism of the Aryan Religion recently published by Dewan Bahadur Ragunatha Row has in it the following questions and answers: "What is meant by sinful? Sinful means being convicted of having transgressed the word of God. Why have souls transgressed His law? I cannot tell you this satisfactorily. I believe that it was His wish that it should be so." That is to say, man sinned with the full approval of his Maker, for some mysterious purpose of His own. Such teaching involves a certain degree of fatality, with which man may console himself in his successive falls.

Let us now turn awhile from these conflicting views and consider the Biblical account—and there is but one—of the entrance of sin into the world. Our first parents, according to the Christian Vedas, were created in the likeness of God and placed in a beautiful garden to dress it and keep it. They were to eat of all the fruit of the garden; but the fruit of a certain tree, they were forbidden to touch on pain of death. Tempted, however, by the enticing words of a being of superior intelligence, they disobeyed the simple command and at once began to feel the beginnings of death in their

whole nature. A more simple and satisfactory narrative of the entrance of sin into the world one cannot conceive of. We do not of course say that the account is absolutely devoid of figure or symbolism. But it must strike all readers of the narrative that the inspired writer has obtained and clothed the tradition in its purest, simplest form. Thus, the Biblical record becomes the test, as it were, of all other traditional accounts of the Fall.

It is perhaps the very brevity and simplicity of the Biblical narrative that has given rise to endless inquiry and keen scrutiny. Why did God make man liable to fall? Why did He not prevent him from sinning? Why did He forbid him to taste the fruit, when He knew full well He would anyhow do so? Is not God after all the author of sin? These are the more important among the questions usually asked.

First, then it is asked, Why did God make man liable to fall? Why make him weak enough to sin? In other words, why was man made a finite creature, and not infinite like God himself? In a word, why was not man made God? This we should say is impossible in the nature of things. In the scale of being, there is no medium between Infinite and finite. The possibility of a second Infinite would make the first a mere finite. It is however enough for us to know that man was made a pure, intelligent, free agent, such as God Himself is, and capable of endless progress. This is the image or likeness of God in which man was created. Supreme love to God was the law of his being as it was to be the measure of his bliss; while a voluntary but complete surrender of his own will to the Will of his Father was to be the expression of that love in his daily life.

The Creator might have made man like the lower animals to move about in strict conformity to blind instinct, but then man is no animal; or He might have made a machine of him and retained in His own hands the mainspring of all his movements, but then, man is no more a machine than a beast

is man. In either case, God would have effaced the Divine stamp He had affixed to man's character. Man lives, moves, and has his being in the region of liberty. He moves, indeed, as he likes, of his own free will and choice, and yet he is to move God-like and fulfil the purpose of his being. Is it still asked, Why did not God prevent man from sinning? Why? Because, if God had interfered, man would have become a mere machine. God could not have compelled man to choose the Good without, at the same time dethroning him from the lofty pedestal of Divine manhood on which He had placed him. None of us desire to have children who are always in leading-strings. Even at the risk of their stumbling and falling, we wish to see them stand and walk by themselves. Thus also in moral matters. None of us wish to have sons and daughters who cannot preserve their virtue when all restraint is removed from them for a time. The stone-walls of a dungeon do not rid a thief of his stealing propensities. Virtue is worth its name only when it is voluntary. If then we, frail men that we are, look for voluntary virtue in our children, how much more would God, *a fortiori*, expect the same in a sinless being just fresh from His Omnipotent Hands? God therefore by leaving man to himself in the hour of trial honored rather than hampered His son by letting him perform those legitimate functions for which his nature was thoroughly equipped.

But the question that most deserves a thoughtful reply is the one which asks, why did God forbid man to touch the fruit of a certain tree in the garden? What need was there for the all-wise and loving Father to introduce this disturbing element into the peaceful domestic life in the Garden of Eden? Why did He not let our first parents enjoy all the fruit of the garden? Why make an exception in the case of one particular tree? What then is the mystery of the command? What purpose did it serve in the economy of the moral world?

Man we should remember, was made pure, but not holy. Purity is simple innocence, but holiness, as the root implies, means wholeness, perfection. And this character of wholeness can only be attained by a process of gradual development. A child is, doubtless, a human being, but it takes years before it can reach perfect manhood. The same law, we observe, prevails in the kingdom of nature. And, as man was endowed with a three-fold nature,—namely, animal, mental, and moral,—he had to go through a three-fold development. In this moral nature lay the very essence of his Divine image, called conscience in popular language. The moral faculty was to preside over the other two natures, regulate their activity, and keep them under its complete control. Man was to cultivate this his higher nature by successive victories over his mental and carnal natures and always preserve his equilibrium in the midst of conflicting forces. We see then that man was made holy or perfect only potentially, to use a technical term. The possibility was there, but he alone could convert the possibility into an actuality. It was his privilege, and no less his glory to do so. His path to victory was to be lit up by his moral nature—which carried within it the Divine “light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” At every step he was to be guided by the warning beacons ‘ought’ and ‘ought not.’ These were the indicators of the Divine will in reference to anything concerning which he was to exercise his volition.

Now to launch our inexperienced first parents on the wide sea of life with so important a task as to achieve the conquest of their lower nature and maintain their liberty, without furnishing them with a code of instruction that should guide and help them in their path and lead them on to victory and perfection, or to warn them of danger imminent or of seductive influences at work in the neighbourhood,—such a proceeding would have been a most cruel and unnatural one on the part of their loving Father! Are not instructions invariably given

to every new official, indicating the exact line of policy he is to pursue? Is it not natural for a father to instruct and counsel his son, especially when he is about to give him a fresh start in life? Likewise the heavenly Father fortifies His children with a very simple code to begin with. Besides, pleading ignorance is a favourite form of excuse. And our first parents would readily have excused themselves if they had not been informed beforehand of their duties and dangers. But by being forewarned, they were fore-armed. The command means in effect: Now, my children, I want once for all to define your position in relation to me and nature. You are to be my representatives on earth and rule nature for me. It is by an endless series of victories that you are to preserve your liberty and the Divine life I have imparted to you. All your faculties, whether of mind or body, you are to keep in subjection to your conscience, which is my voice within you. There is, however, an enemy lurking about the garden who is envious of your happiness. He will assail you at the most unexpected points. But in order to strengthen you for the conflict, I shall put you in the way by means of a very simple command, which if you keep and make a good beginning, your prospects of final victory will be very good, but if you fail, there will be no chance of your standing future trials. There is more than enough for you to eat and enjoy in the garden. You will suffer nothing by avoiding but one tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Now, begin your victories by keeping this most easy command." Thus, does the Divine Educator provoke a gentle struggle between duty and pleasure. "Thou shalt not eat" was a protecting fence erected by a Father's hand to keep off instinct and withstand its invasions.

We are, however, aware of the sad termination of this first trial. Man deliberately chose pleasure in preference to duty. Yielding to instinct, he lost his liberty and became a slave of his flesh, His love to God fell short of its mark. His will crossed the Divine will.

For Eve, her rash hand, in evil hour  
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked—she ate!  
Earth felt the wound ; and nature from her seat  
Sighing thro' all her works, gave signs of woe  
That all was lost.

It is indeed a redeeming feature in the trial that the instinct of sight and taste were goaded on by the persuasive argument of a more powerful spirit, who, the Bible says, had not kept his estate in Heaven, but having rebelled against God, of his own free will, and unassailed by carnal instinct or cunning seducer, had been expelled and doomed to a life of eternal misery.

How sin entered Satan's soul, we can never explain much less understand. But this is the origin of sin in the Universe.

These thoughts lead us to dwell on the second mystery, *viz.*, that in relation to the nature of sin. The efficacy of no remedy for sin can be properly tested without a knowledge of what sin truly is. Hence, the vast importance of this part of our subject. Unfortunately, the English word 'Sin' is not a very happy term. It does not carry its meaning on its face. Its derivation points to a mythical origin. The root *sygin* from which the word is said to be derived was the name of Loke's consort. This Loke of northern mythology was an evil being who used to negotiate between the gods and the giants, and was ever bent on mischief. The myth speaks for itself and carries our thoughts far into pre-creation days, and reminds us of the intrigues of Satan. It was probably on the authority of this myth that Milton in his great epic has represented sin as a female angel in love with Satan and in league with his old conspiracies in the Court of Heaven. To us, however, the mythical derivation of the word indicates the ultra-mundane origin of sin. On the other hand, we are more fortunate in the possession of equivalents from the Hebrew, Greek, Sanscrit, Tamil and other languages, all of which signify a



'missing the mark;' 'a falling short of the proper standard,' 'failure', 'imperfection.'

Leaving aside notions which represent sin as an eternal entity, an illusion caused by Brahma, an emanation from God, a result of the union of spirit and flesh, let us consider the views which are commonly held as to the nature of sin. Most people have no idea of the sinfulness of sin, if I may so express it. All actions which are performed for good or gain, are not regarded as sins, however wrong they may be morally. Often and often merchants have told me in all seriousness that mercantile lies and frauds are no sins. On the contrary, they deem it sinful to tell a truth which may injure a neighbour. A celebrated Tamil poet has even thought it fit to enjoin a falsehood, if by telling it one can save another in distress. It is also a common habit to justify special acts of sin on the score of necessity.

Most people again consider every act a sin, which is in violation of one or more of the following four classes of so-called morality: *viz.* Government morality, social morality, ceremonial morality, and religious morality. The Indian Penal Code helps to create a sort of superficial morality. He who escapes its clutches is considered a highly moral man. An unfortunate man who has been detected and sent to prison is a great sinner; while the systematic swindler, or the reckless debauchee, is a respectable member of society, not having been convicted in a Police Court. Social morality covers a far wider circle, but it applies to purely social matters. Violations of laws of this class are none the less heinous sins: and are frequently visited with severe punishment. And closely connected with this sort of morality is ceremonial morality, crimes against which are treated as highly iniquitous. There may not be the least moral element in the laws and regulations of society—on the other hand, there may be, as is often the case, a high degree of immorality and injustice in them, still they must be obeyed on pain of excommunication. Social ostracism

is the great bugbear of India. In such a society, the individual has no liberty. Liberty, the precious birth-right of man, is sacrificed on the altar of Society. Society thinks, feels, and acts for the individual and not the individual, for himself. "The duties of life", says Bishop Caldwell, "are never inculcated in any Hindu temple. The discharge of those duties is never represented as enjoined by the gods, nor are any prayers ever offered in any temple for help to enable the worshippers to discharge those duties aright. Hence, we often see religion going in one direction and morality in another. We meet with a moral Hindu who has broken altogether away from religion and what is still more common, yet still more extraordinary, we meet with a devout Hindu who lives a flagrantly immoral life. In the latter case no person sees any inconsistency between the immorality and the devoutness." It is a sad picture, and yet it is the result of a totally distorted view of the mystery of sin.

What then is the true nature of sin? First of all, sin is not so much an act as a state of the soul. By attending too much to acts of sin, we err with respect to the essence of sin. Popularly, we do speak of the eating of the forbidden fruit as Adam's first great sin. The eating, however, was merely an effect of sin which had already been conceived in the heart. The moment our first parents began to distrust their Father, and cooled the ardour of their love towards Him, the fountain of sin was opened in their hearts. The Bible says that sin is the transgression of the law of God. What Law? The law of love. For all law is based on love. And God is Love. Sin is a perverse state of the will. Man does not and will not love God or fellow-man as he feels he ought to.

The true nature of sin may be best understood by comparing it to the disease of the lungs called consumption. Let us imagine to ourselves a youthful patient in a somewhat advanced stage of the malady. And what do we observe? Loss of appetite, aversion for food, difficult deglutition, high tem-

perature of the skin, wasting away of the body, painful respiration, &c. But are these the disease? By no means. All of them may or may not be there. These are simply symptoms of the disease which has its seat and source in the lungs. Thus, the faults and failings we see objectively, around us and in ourselves, are but the symptoms of the disease called sin. Sin is a million times wider and deeper than can be embraced by all the laws of government, society and religious systems put together. Its essential elements are utter absence of true love, and alliance with the prince of darkness. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither molified with ointment." In a word, sin is death—death of the spirit, the soul, and the body. Viewed in this light, all men are equally sinful. "There is no difference." The symptoms may vary in different patients. Their number and nature may differ in different individuals. Refinement and civilization and even religion so-called may conceal them under a bright polish, nevertheless, the mortal disease is within. For all are consumptive and undergoing a slow death. Let but the restraining laws of government and society be relaxed for a time—then would the dire epidemic take its free course and make havoc of the race. It has even converted religion—even the sacred name of religion, into a cloak for vices of the most abominable nature.

Is there no remedy for so frightful a disease? Has the mystery never been solved? Thoughtful men have in all ages sought to discover a cure—an antidote to sin. But like the search after the Philosopher's stone and the Elixir of life it has always ended in disappointment. Most people are of course quite indifferent to the ravages of sin. Food or pleasure or both are the sole objects of their life and labour. But

among those who feel its pangs, some mistaking the symptoms for the disease try to get rid of it by suppressing, tortoise-like as they say, the five organs of sense; but they soon find this method to be as useless as to get rid of a thief by fastening the door and windows of a room while he himself is within. By far the greater number of people, however, endeavour to remove sin by going through a life-long series of rites and ceremonies, pilgrimages, charitable deeds, sacred baths and the like, all external observances which have nothing whatever to do with sin itself. Besides, it is not so much to destroy the power of sin as to escape its penal consequences that these good works are performed. Others again think that a good set of moral rules will prove an effectual remedy for sin. But moral rules have existed from time immemorial. The essential ones are already written on the heart. Justice, truth and love are eternal as the heavens. Our Hindu reformers even go so far as to approve of all religions, because each of them has a more or less complete code of morals. But what help can a number of abstract rules render to a young man, wavering in the blazing fire of a strong temptation? It was not for want of a law that Adam sinned; nor is it for the absence of a penal code that our city is filled with criminals, both detected and undetected. Moreover, moral rules can affect, if they affect at all, the symptoms only, but they can never reach the seat of the disease. A few earnest souls are making efforts to cure the disease without a remedy. They do want the physician—the only one who can save us from sin;—but they do not want the remedy He offers. They believe that an honest statement of their case to the Doctor would be quite enough to effect a cure. But theists will soon learn that they can no more cure the disease by this their own process than divert a stream back to its source. How can mortal men presume to dictate the mode of cure to the Divine Physician?

Thus one method and another have been tried and are still being tried to remedy the evil. Human earnestness and in-

genuity have done their best, but failed in every fresh attempt. New methods are from time to time invented and announced with the greatest assurance as to their therapeutic virtues, but when tried, they turn out to be only the old methods in new forms.

But earnest and clear-sighted individuals have been moved in different parts of the world to assert with prophetic instinct that God must come down if man is to be saved. Like traditions of the Fall, those of a promised Deliverer have also been preserved among the nations of the world. Socrates, the mouthpiece of enlightened Greece, expected the gods to visit the earth. The prophets of Palestine constantly predicted the advent of a World-Saviour. The Chaldeans of Persia had similar forebodings of a Divine King to come. There is a text in the Hindu Vedas which reads as follows : Prajapati, that is, the Lord of creatures, offered himself a sacrifice for the benefit of the devas. The tenth avatar of Vishnu is yet to appear. Dravidian poets have sung of the Divine Satguru who has come to save the world. To many it may not be known that the artisan castes of South India have a tradition among themselves of a Divine Carpenter who is to appear as the world-guru. An avatar, *i. e.*, a descent of God from heaven to earth, has ever been the hope and stay of the race since the Fall.

Has the Divine Physician appeared then with an infallible cure for sin? He has, God be praised. The mystery of sin has at last found its true solution. The remedy is now within our reach. But before we can fully appreciate the true character of the remedy, we must be sure as to the chief effects of sin. These are three : first, sin has destroyed the Divine life in us by cutting off all communion with God. It has thrown an impenetrable barrier between man and his Maker. Man now has no knowledge of God and His will—except the little he can gather from nature, and that little chiefly as to his power and wisdom. Every earnest man feels, that this ‘middle wall of partition must be broken down.’ God must be

revealed, union restored, and man made once more a recipient of Divine life.' Secondly, sin has made all men guilty—guilty of the most heinous crime against the moral Governor of the Universe. Every sinner feels that he must receive from God Himself an assurance that his sin has been fully atoned for and that there is pardon for him. It is this instinctive craving in the human soul that has expressed itself in sacrifices, sin-offerings, prayaschittams, propitiatory oblations and a host of other methods of atonement. Sin has made us a race of guilty criminals. And thirdly, sin has made man weak, morally and spiritually. It has crippled his energy for good; and to use the good old Greek simile, the white horse is utterly incapable of coping with the obstreperous black horse. We feel we are quite unable to do what we know to be right and proper. Every man has an ideal before him, according to the light he possesses, but he is also aware that he is continually falling short of his ideal. And yet his ideal must be a very poor one, for it can never rise higher than his own or his society's standard of right and wrong. But when the true ideal is revealed from heaven, and frail man stands face to face before Infinite love, then will he feel how miserably weak he is even to attempt to realize so lofty an ideal. Man needs strength.

These then are the three forms of the disease;—spiritual death, irremovable guilt, and moral weakness. And the true remedy for sin can only effect a radical cure by eradicating each of these evils. It must first restore union between man and God and place Divine life within man's reach; next, it must bring him pardon procured by virtue of an adequate atonement; and lastly, it must place at his disposal a never-failing supply of moral strength and power.

About 19 centuries ago, God graciously entered humanity at the very heart of it where the higher life-blood was beating with the greatest vigour. Patriotic Englishmen speak of London as the centre of the terrestrial hemisphere, and so it

is. But persons of a more cosmopolitan feeling would see a spiritual centre in that little spot of land called Palestine which forms the connecting link of Europe, Asia, and Africa ; for it was from this source that the Divine stream flowed, and still continues to flow on with life and healing in its current. In Christ Jesus, God made divine life once more accessible to man. In Christ Jesus, God's holy love was revealed in all its fulness, and the veil removed from the mystery of sin. In Christ Jesus, the human race sees man at his climax ; for in him even J. S. Mill beholds the " ideal representative and guide of humanity." In Christ Jesus a second Adam was born, by union with whom man was to obtain re-union with God. In Christ Jesus, the sin of the world was fully expiated ; for he is that Prajapati that offered himself a sacrifice for the devas, or in Christian language, " He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." By union with Christ, man secures at once life, pardon and strength. And this union is obtained by accepting Christ as our Saviour and Lord.

In conclusion, what India needs is an awakened conscience, a deep sense of her sinfulness and guilt—and of her need of spiritual life and pardon. Then will she cry unto her God for salvation and find it in the Divine man—Christ Jesus. Now, she is a jewel in England's crown ; then, she will be a gem in the Lord's diadem. With the remedy in his hand, the divine physician lovingly invites you saying, " I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden ; and I will give you rest." Reader, will you come ?

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## 5. HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUNG ENQUIRERS.\*

Enquirers, as understood in the Christian Church, may be said to occupy the border land between the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of heaven. Looked at in whatever light, and from whatever standpoint, they form a most interesting class. It was for their special benefit that John Angell James wrote his immortal work. They are the hope of the coming church, and the object of the pastor's special care. A tide has set in in the young enquirer's heart, which, if taken at the flood and wisely and lovingly guided, will eventually develop into a living, powerful stream, fertilizing the soil through which it flows. But it is not in every enquiring soul that such a tide sets in. The person may call or at least consider himself an enquirer, and yet the enquiry may concern things which have no direct bearing on the subject of salvation. A deep sense of sinfulness, with a longing desire for pardon and peace—which are the most essential characteristics of the enquirer properly so called—may not exist in the soul, and yet he may have serious thoughts regarding God, sin, and life. Or he may be a sceptic viewing everything with doubt or indifference, and yet possess an enquiring turn of mind, more or less anxious to discover truth on which his soul might feed and find some rest. A Christian minister has to meet with all such enquirers in the course of his ministry and adapt his methods to the special condition and capacity of every individual enquirer—from the most vague and sceptical up to the most earnest and genuine.

Though enquirers in India bear a family likeness to their brethren in Christendom, they have peculiarities of their own, resulting chiefly from early religious thoughts and habits, and the surroundings of their life. Search after truth, there is but the conditions which alone could crown that search with

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success are generally conspicuous by their absence. Deep religious earnestness, or to adopt the Master's way of putting it "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," in the sight of God, is no distinguishing feature of Indian religious inquiry. There is often a desire for baptism, and more generally a desire to know something of Christianity, but seldom a desire to make the personal acquaintance of Christ.

In India every missionary has his enquirers. If he is a man of influence, or gifted with a kindly disposition, or known to be ignorant of native character, the number of his enquirers is usually large. For in this country religious inquiry has become a paying concern. The so-called enquirer is well aware of its commercial value and plies his trade with all the ability he possesses. We shall not now inquire into the origin of this strange state of things, but simply bear in mind that when we have to deal with enquirers the great majority of those who go by this name in this country are mere pretenders. Whether such enquiry has resulted in baptism or not, I am sure many will confess that they have sometimes been victims of religious fraud. If the enquirer has been baptized, the object of the enquiry was to obtain an easy means of livelihood and if baptism has been evaded, as is the case in most instances of this kind, some favour has been secured or at least assiduously tried for. I shall tell you a story of Bombay and the Bible. A young man, an old pupil of mine but an orthodox Hindu, unable to find employment in Madras, had resolved to try his chance in Bombay. He once called on me and asked for a copy of the Bible. On expressing my surprise at this strange request, he told me he would go with the Book to missionaries in Bombay, introduce himself as a candidate for baptism and soon obtain a post in that city. I know a man who has become a member of four successive churches in Madras, solely with the view of obtaining employment, and every time the pastor failed to get him employed, he left his church finding fault with its doctrines or practices.

Wandering enquirers are the most difficult ones to deal with. They generally come with a story that, for the sake of their convictions, they have been persecuted in their native place and driven away from home and friends. Whatever their story may be, (and it is always a pitiful one,) the safest course is to have nothing whatever to do with them. They may be, however, advised to go back to their town, in which case trainage or some such help is sure to be asked for—and after all, a little money may be the sole object of the visit. I have known young men assume the disguise of an enquirer even for a single meal. Some are very bold. Once a Brahman wrote from Pondicherry to a missionary in Madras expressing his desire to be baptized with his wife. He called himself a graduate in medicine of the Bombay University, and intended, as he said, to become a medical missionary. He was received hospitably and entertained according to his alleged position. But it was soon discovered that the enquirer was no graduate, and when the imposture was brought home to him, he left Madras and appeared in Secunderabad under another name.

Some young fellows are ingenious enough to assume even the form of a high degree of piety. A young Jaffnese used to visit me very regularly for some time. His whole talk and demeanour had not only made a pleasing impression but he seemed very anxious for baptism. "I can't read the Word of God in the midst of my companions," he would say, "they snatch the treasure away from my hands and deprive me of the comfort of reading it: please remove me from this persecution." We went on conversing for a while, and when about to take leave, the enquirer asked, "Will you pray for me?" I was quite overcome with sympathy. Further inquiry, however, revealed the young man in his true colours. He was a runaway Roman Catholic from Tanjore, anxious to pass the Matriculation examination in this city. We cannot be too careful in dealing with enquirers whose antecedents we know nothing about.

Sometimes enquirers are introduced who have already been taken to other ministers. This leads to a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding. A young Brahman widow was recently brought to me as a candidate for baptism. She had already been taken to a brother-minister. But everything connected with this part of her story was carefully omitted. Being satisfied with what I heard from three competent parties regarding her and with her own knowledge and character, I kept her under instruction for six weeks and then baptized her. But immediately after baptism, anonymous correspondents referred to the matter and even blamed me for baptizing her without consulting the minister to whom she had first been presented. On the other hand, while I was dealing with a certain enquirer and hesitating to pay him two or three rupees a month while under instruction, he was clandestinely introduced to a brother-missionary, who, like me in the previous case, being quite ignorant of all the enquirer's antecedents, readily arranged ten rupees a month for his board, and baptized him and gave him his name into the bargain. To avoid all such unpleasantness, ministers should take good care to warn their brethren about enquirers who absent themselves after the first visit or two. There seems to be an undue eagerness in the matter of baptisms. It is not an uncommon or rare occurrence that the movements of enquirers are jealously watched by interested parties, who make it their special effort to describe the glories and prospects of their respective churches. Such trade in the matter of enquirers ought to be discouraged, if not invariably condemned, and every effort put forth to emphasize the essentially spiritual character of religious enquiry.

To missionaries, however, all enquirers must be alike. At least in the first instance. Like the law, they should be no respecters of persons. Though previous experience may lead the missionary to suspect the motives of the enquirer before him, he should reserve judgment for the time being and treat the young man as a genuine enquirer. Trying to read charac-

ter in the face or the general expression of the countenance is a dangerous venture, especially in the case of a foreigner who knows far too little of the inner working of an Indian mind. In a word, the enquirer must be taken at his word and treated accordingly. After the first interview, arrangements must be made for his regular instruction at stated intervals. He should not be encouraged to invade the missionary's study at any and every hour of the day. I have had visits even at 10 P. M. But the day and the hour once fixed must be faithfully set apart for the enquirer. His previous knowledge of things spiritual being ascertained to some extent, instruction must proceed. The Bible must be read and explained. At this time instead of presenting the enquirer with a handsome gilt volume, he may be asked, as a simple test of his sincerity and earnestness, to purchase a cheap Testament. Time will do the rest. If no request for a favour or a letter of introduction or some other evidence of an underlying sinister motive does not betray the enquirer's character in the course of a week or two, the period of probation and instruction may be safely continued. In the present state of India, nine out of ten such enquirers will soon absent themselves, when they find that their selfish hopes have not been gratified. But no favours whatever must be granted to those who seek the missionary as enquirers. That would place a premium on dishonesty and bring both the religion and its teacher into deserved contempt, as misunderstood benevolence of this kind has already done to an alarming extent in this country. But the so-called enquirer might be kindly, yet sternly, shewn the sinfulness of his conduct, and advantage might well be taken of any signs of repentance to direct his attention to a higher spiritual plane. It was to an apparently ardent enquirer that the Master said that though foxes had their holes and birds their nests, He Himself had nowhere to lay His head.

One form of missionary kindness now in vogue is to offer tea to Hindu friends and, especially, to so-called enquirers. Though

the motive may be laudable, the practice is not beyond question. It places the missionary in a false relation to the young Hindu, and the young Hindu in a false relation to his friends and relations. I have done this myself. Except in the case of a few who openly defy the rules of their caste, the majority of young men do so only on the sly, and act quite like orthodox Hindus in their own private circles. They thus lead a double life and actually belie their Indian conscience, while *we* become in our turn aiders and abettors of this dishonourable behaviour. Let nothing be done which is likely to leave an impression in the young enquirer's mind that we are, for our own purposes, encouraging him in his cowardly violation of caste scruples.

Can we ever make ourselves absolutely certain regarding the character of an enquirer, even after a long and searching acquaintance? In other words, are there any data by which we can decide for ourselves the genuineness of an enquirer's motives? This is an all-important question and ought to be faced in all fairness. On the negative side, that is to say, where a test or two is successful in betraying the true motives of an insincere enquirer, we may without the slightest hesitation form a decided judgment against him. But our difficulty is very great on the affirmative side. Even when all tests fail, when no selfish hopes are betrayed, when the character is all that can be desired, when there are unmistakable signs of repentance and anxious prayers for peace and rest, when it is clear that the judgment is sound and well-informed—even under such highly favourable conditions, we ought to be exceedingly careful and merely cherish the hope—not assert the fact—that the enquirer is a fit subject for the kingdom of heaven. The uncertainties and perversities of the human mind are such that all these symptoms may be successfully simulated by a spurious enquirer, gifted with skill enough to play his part perfectly before a foreign observer, or, in spite of all these evidences of a genuine repentance, there may be lacking that will-power and the courage that mounts with the occasion, which, when the

critical period arrives, may prevent the enquirer from crossing the Rubicon. The case of Subbaraya Sastri and the more recent one of S. Ramanujam, M.A., B.L., are not unknown to at least some of us. The former was a typical enquirer. He had visited me often, and prayed and read with me in my study. I still remember the Friday morning when with bated breath and moistened eyes the young Brahman told me he had made the great decision and was immediately going away to Mr. Raa. The whole city was in an uproar. Indignation meetings were held and resolutions passed against the enquirer and the missionaries. Many and prolonged were the interviews held with him by both parents and friends. "The whole army of Satan," he wrote to me, "is arrayed against me, but by God's grace I shall stand." But at last the bride of his childhood, whom he had not seen for years, now grown up into a charming young woman, was ushered into his presence, and Subbaraya, like the ancient rishis of India, yielded and went away with his wife. The spirit indeed was willing but the flesh was weak. The recantation of Ramanujam is even a greater reason for caution in pre-judging the case of hopeful enquirers.

The character of the enquirer is generally better known *after* his baptism. When the romance of enquiry and undisturbed hours of study and serious talk have passed into the stern realities of life, with all its trials and temptations, under altogether new surroundings and somewhat unpleasant associations, it is then that the enquirer is put to the test and frequently betrays himself. The convert's complaints are a common topic of talk in both Christian and Hindu circles. What is all this complaint and heart-burning but a proof that either the convert had not been a genuine enquirer or failed to grasp the full significance of Christ's claims, or that the missionary had formed a hasty or erroneous conclusion in admitting him to baptism? The hitherto innocent and placid stream whose source has been believed to be some lofty mountain spring is

now found to derive its supply from some dirty pool in the plains below.

But a possibility of deception on the part of an apparently genuine enquirer should not needlessly prolong the period of probation. He must be taken at his word. If the usual signs of repentance and spiritual enlightenment are present, and nothing suspicious in his character and history has been suggested by the judicious application of suitable tests, the enquirer ceases to be such and becomes an accepted candidate for baptism. Absolute certainty being impossible, one cannot but act according to his best judgment, seeking God's guidance throughout and hoping for the best.

I think the time has now come for the definition of the phrase "young enquirers." By "young enquirers" I understand those who, though they may be majors in the eye of law, are still under the protection and guardianship of their parents or other senior relatives. I have all along taken it for granted that it is this particular class of young people we have been considering up till now. Anyhow with this definition in view, the missionary's relation to enquirers assumes at once a more defined and serious aspect. In the case of independent enquirers—as opposed to those who are dependent youths—both the missionary and the enquirer are quite free to act as they think proper. But where young men are concerned who are supported and educated by their parents, or who, though earning their own livelihood, are still a part of the family circle and live under their parents' roof, the missionary's dealings with enquirers from this class need a special consideration in this paper.

The questions that naturally suggest themselves are: (1) if such young enquirers may be admitted and instructed; (2) if they appear to be genuine, are they to be baptized? and (3) if they are to be baptized, on what conditions? As regards the first question, it may be stated that as a rule minors under 18 years of age had better not be encouraged at all. If they have a

religious turn of mind, they have their Bible lessons in their class, and their Bibles in their hands, while Sunday Schools and Christian services and an excellent literature always within their reach. But majors who are also students in a college may be allowed to visit the missionary at stated times, but only with the permission or at least full knowledge of their parents. Clandestine visits should be invariably discouraged.

The second question deserves more serious treatment. If a "young enquirer," as we now understand him, has passed his probation satisfactorily, and, as far as the missionary's judgment goes, has convinced him of his sincerity and earnestness, and is further desirous of baptism, is the missionary to incur the responsibility of baptizing him? At first sight it seems that the missionary's clear duty is to administer the right to so deserving a candidate. But India is not England, and a caste-ridden heathen land presents no exact parallel to a Christian country where perfect liberty flourishes as in a congenial soil. In consequence of this contrast, the baptism of a "young enquirer" is always beset with peculiar difficulties and danger—so much so, that a view is gaining ground in the opposite direction.

I shall try to hold a brief for both the parties in succession, and do my best to state the case for each as fairly as possible. The following reasons are urged on behalf of the young enquirer's baptism. There is first of all Christ's express command. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." To refuse baptism is to disregard the Master's injunction. An enquirer who has advanced so far as to accept Christ as his Saviour cannot with impunity neglect the divinely appointed channel of grace. There is great danger in indefinite delay. The iron must be struck while it is hot. To delay baptism, when once convinced of its necessity, is to take a retrograde step; and whither it will lead, only those can say who have watched the subsequent career of such enquirers. Even on the most modest estimate of it, baptism places its seal



on the enquirer, separates him from the world and identifies him with the Christian Church. Without its seal, he goes about as a nondescript individual, and is neither Christian nor Hindu. The unbaptized enquirer is an untended, fragile creeper without prop or fence, and exposed to the fury of the winds and the ferocity of animals. The Master Himself baptized His disciples. His apostles did the same. It was only by submitting to baptism that so many young Indians subsequently rose to be leaders and ornaments of the Church in this country. The missionary who stops short of baptism fails to discharge his duty completely; he sails under false colours. After producing conviction in the enquirer's mind, he should press him to be baptized at any cost, come what may. The ties of kith and kin, wealth and position, caste and its privileges—these he may lose; but his soul outweighs them all. The enquirer, therefore, dare not refuse to be baptized.

Now let us hear the pleading on the other side. In the present state of society in India, it is undesirable to baptize a young enquirer. Whatever the case may be with his religious conscience, a young member of a Hindu family has no right to tear himself away from the associations and ties of home. He should not render himself guilty of ingratitude to those who have spent years of toil and care and money on his growth and education. The missionary ought not to encourage such heart-rending separation. Even granting that the enquirer is hurried on to take the critical step, separation from home must inevitably follow. He must in that case pass from one kind of life to quite another. Not only does he thus cut himself off from his relations, but he does not find himself at home in his new surroundings. The very food is distasteful to him, while the actual Christian life which he now sees for the first time with closer eyes is anything but edifying. How different, he exclaims, is the Christianity of the pulpit and the study from that of the house and private circles! He is young and inexperienced, and soon gets discouraged and depressed. He could well

have waited a few years longer in his house and nourished his youthful faith until he could stand on his own legs and command his own affairs. Modern theology has outgrown the doctrine of the horrors of hell-fire, which about a quarter of a century ago used to be threatened against all unbaptized young men. Besides baptism there must be other channels of grace which a merciful Father can create to meet the special needs of youthful enquirers while under parental authority and support. The Quakers and Salvationists do not baptize. The Master does not seem to have made baptism a prominent feature of His work. He simply taught and helped. Nicodemus was permitted to remain an unbaptized enquirer. The Apostle Paul congratulated himself on his having baptized but few of his converts. In reality, the young enquirer *can* live and act as a believer, as many are doing at this moment, under his own parental roof. A little firmness and meekness will soon disarm any opposition or ridicule that may be raised against the young believer. He may meet with special persecution when he is forced to marry, but God who has hitherto led him is sure to strengthen him in the conflict. Heroism has ever been the chief feature of the early Christian Church. And there is great need for it in the early Indian Church. It is not by hastily fleeing away from the trial and persecution that awaits him at home, but by living and testifying for Christ, from day to day, and for years together, if necessary, in the midst of his friends and foes, that like the faithful martyr, Uncle Tom, the young enquirer is to take up his cross and follow his Master. Christ's warning words against greater love for mother and father than Him are not applicable to the case in hand. Christ could not have meant mere bodily separation as the embodiment of the love He demands.

We have now heard both sides of the question. It is for us to decide what particular course to adopt with regard to the baptism of young enquirers. There is a great deal to be said

for either view. On a careful comparison, however, of the arguments on both sides, I venture to think that the baptism of young enquirers should, as a rule, be avoided. I say *as a rule*, because there may from time to time occur cases in which young men of this class may hear the Divine call with no uncertain sound and have neither peace nor rest until they have come out publicly and through baptism sealed their faith in the Son of God. If such a case occurs, the third question needs to be answered. On what conditions is the young enquirer to be baptized? The candidate must in such a case be baptized, but no temporal help of any kind whatsoever should be given him. This may sound harsh and cruel. But this is the only way by which the sincerity of the convert and the character of Christianity may be vindicated in the eyes of the public. The invariable combination of baptism with benevolence has been the bane of the Indian Church. It has brought into existence a number of dishonest enquirers whose one sole purpose is to gain a living. It has brought Christianity into contempt. It has rendered the native church a cripple, though two hundred years old. It has given rise to many a scornful saying among the Hindus—*e.g.* “To become a Christian is to fall into Christian rice (food).” It has lowered both the spiritual and moral tone of native Christians. It has taught every candidate for baptism to expect a double blessing, one for his soul and the other for his body; and so sure is he of his expectation, that if the latter is not conferred, the former is not accepted. If the young enquirer has indeed received a Divine call and feels it his imperative duty to respond to that call, let him remember that “man shall not live by bread alone but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” A young convert thrown back upon his own resources, and struggling manfully, whether at home or abroad, according as he has been baptized or not, will exert a far greater influence for good among his people, than a hundred objects of charitable relief could ever hope to

do. It is true we have very high ideals as to how we should deal with young enquirers, but the eagerness to report a baptism is so great both in this country and the West that our practice seldom comes up to the standard of our ideals.

But it must be admitted that the number of genuine enquirers is in India miserably small. Gifted revivalists and evangelists like Taylor and Pentecost, so successful in their work among professed Christians, have not succeeded in gaining converts from among Hindus—for the simple reason that there are no enquirers here. If I understand aright, the first part of the great commission, our first and chief work is to make disciples, that is to say, enquirers, of all nations. I am afraid that in much of our preaching we are thoughtlessly “casting pearls before swine.” It is even desirable that we should keep back the Gospel at certain times and merely aim at stirring up a spirit of inquiry and thought. On the Pentecostal day, it was only when the multitudes, were *pricked* in their hearts, that they cried out to be saved. Those of us, therefore, who have to deal with young Hindus have a special field to cultivate and prepare for seed-sowing. Their religious attitude must be carefully studied and analysed. Our addresses and our conversations must be adapted to their thoughts and aspirations. Enquirers rather than converts, earnest seekers after truth rather than applicants for Christian charity, ought to be the primary object of our labours. These will be our congregation for the present and from these will come forth the heroes of a mighty Indian Church.

## 6. THE CONVERSION OF INDIA.

The Conversion of India must be a matter of the deepest interest to every Christian who knows and loves this ancient land. To the Indian missionary it must be specially so. Will India ever own Christ as her only Lord and Saviour? Will she with her teeming millions throw away her gods and idols

to the bats and moles and serve the living God in spirit and in truth? Will she ever awaken to a sense of her national sinfulness and degradation and seek peace and the source of national strength from the God of all the Earth? These are thoughts which no doubt occupy the hearts of all earnest Christian workers in India, and of the no less earnest men and women in Christendom who continue to maintain the work in India.

But what do we understand by the phrase, the conversion of India? Let us be clear as to its meaning. If the conversion of India means the general Christianizing of the people such as is implied in a nominal exchange of objects of worship as we see it in Europe and America, then indeed is the prospect very encouraging and our task comparatively easy and short. There are several considerations which lead one to the opinion that the time when nominal Christianity will prevail in India is not far distant.

*First.*—The social fabric of the Hindus, especially in the large cities, is undergoing a rapid change. Dissolution would be too strong a term for the disintegration that has certainly commenced. The rigidity of that monster evil—caste—is becoming more and more lax. Just look at the audacity as well as impunity with which a dozen Sudras publicly dine with an Englishman. Ten years ago, such conduct would have been punished by instantaneous expulsion from Hindu society. What does all this signify? It proves that public opinion among Hindus is changing in the direction of individual liberty. This liberty of thought and action is a characteristic of Christian nations, while it is quite incompatible with the genius of Hinduism. Without caste Hinduism cannot exist. When caste goes, Hinduism must follow suit.

*Secondly.*—The religious notions of the Hindus are changing for the better. A close reader of modern religious thought in India could easily read a paper on the contribution of Christianity in this great change. The Indian conception of God is

now more refined and accurate. The Hindu Triad, *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Siva*, or any of the incarnations are not more identified with the Supreme Being. The immorality of the gods is fully admitted. A new meaning, tinged with the complexion of Christian truth is being read into Hindu teachings. There is certainly now a New Hinduism to which aged and uneducated Hindus are perfect strangers. The moral tone is considerably raised above its former low level. Government has more than once acknowledged the general integrity of its educated Native officials. Thus, a rise in the moral tone means a gradual approach towards Christianity

*Thirdly.*—Admiration for the person and character of Christ is also an important factor in the national movement. Keshub Chunder Sen struggled hard to familiarize the name of Christ to his countrymen. It is now almost universally acknowledged that Christ is the holiest person and the greatest Teacher the world has ever known. His words are often on the lips of educated Hindus. People take His character as their standard and unconsciously mould their lives after His model. With the help of the light His character has shed on this country and its people, thoughtful minds have begun to discover vices in their national customs and crimes in the acts enjoined by their scriptures. It is, however, only admiration for His character; not a belief in the Divinity of His person or His living presence among His disciples, nor in the efficacy of His atoning death. Still, so far as admiration is awakened, the way is paved for the exchange of Christ for Krishna.

*Fourthly.*—Mass conversions—as the baptisms of poorer classes in large numbers are called—are also playing a prominent part. Increasing Christian populations in Tinnevely and South Travancore, in the cotton soils of Cuddapah and Bellary, in the maritime tracts of Ongole and Guntur, in the rural districts of the Panjab and the North-West Provinces—not to speak of conversions on a smaller scale—cannot fail to affect the Hindus in their respective neighbourhoods. I look

upon these congregations as beacons intended to multiply themselves in course of time and light up the whole Indian continent. It must not be forgotten that Europe was won very much through mass conversions. What was done there will be repeated here. As regards the natural increase of population and the superior privileges of Native Christians, Hinduism finds herself at a disadvantage. Fifty years ago Native Christians were a poor and despised people—now they are an enlightened and respected community. The Hindus cannot help seeing this and they naturally endeavour to follow in their wake. Native Christian women of even very moderate education have already the lead of their Indian sisters in all the larger cities and towns. The whole influence, then, as far as it is felt, is decidedly Christian.

*Lastly.*—The extreme simplicity of Christianity as a religious system cannot fail to attract the people of this country as their eyes become opened to the value of economy and material comfort. As is well known, Hinduism imposes on its votaries a series of expensive ceremonies which begin with their birth and only end with their death. There is no religion under the sun so burdensome and exorbitant as the Brahminism of India. It binds the Hindu hand and foot. Christianity on the other hand, demands no ceremonies whatever from its followers. It is essentially an ethical religion, affecting the heart and the conduct in outward life. This feature cannot but be welcome to Hindus when they begin to feel the grinding pressure of ever-recurring rites and ceremonies, which do good to neither body nor soul.

It may be urged with some reason that a revolt against the superstitions and practices of Hinduism will land the people on the arid sands of materialism rather than on the road to Christianity. It may indeed; but only for a time. In Christendom a few first drifted on to scepticism; then to deism; and then again to atheism. But when they found they could not maintain their ground, they proclaimed themselves agnos-

tics ; and now they are engaged in investigating the evolution, not of cosmos or inert matter, but of ethical man. History will repeat itself with greater emphasis, in India. Like man, the masses will worship. When they have removed every god from their Pantheon, they will put in a new one—and that one, I believe, will be Christ.

But it must be admitted that India is very slow in her movement towards Christianity. Within a comparatively short period Europe submitted itself to the sway of the cross. Why does India take so long ? The little word, caste, explains it all. The monster has not had its like on the other side of the globe. It is peculiar to India. All the evil that is implied in the Portuguese word 'caste' can be fully grasped only by those who are intimately acquainted with the deep and strong foundation on which the social fabric of India rests. Caste then is the chief obstacle to the rapid progress of Christianity as a system in this country. Still, the particulars mentioned above point very clearly to the time—not far distant—when India will be converted to Christianity.

It is acknowledged in all Protestant lands that the conversion of India, including as it does the victory over Islam and Hinduism, is the first and greatest mission to which Western Christendom is called. It is no doubt a fact that Christianity has only touched as yet the fringe of India, but is that any reason why we should despair of the ultimate triumph of Christianity ? Let us briefly consider the peculiar conditions confronted by the propagators of the Christian faith in this land.

A writer in the *Quarterly Review* rightly compares the condition of India at present to that of the Roman Empire at the accession of Marcus Aurelius. India is passing through a period of unrest and exhaustion, of ferment, and of indecision. Now, as in the Roman Empire, local beliefs have lost their power. Now, as then, men take refuge in a compromise between Christianity and heathenism. But there is not the slight-



est doubt that the preaching of Christianity has influenced thought far beyond the definite area of the Christian Church. Those best acquainted with the Indian mind at the present moment are persuaded that the leaven of Christianity is working secretly in unsuspected quarters.

In the present critical condition of Indian thought, it is of the utmost importance that the advocates of Christianity should have mastered the religious systems prevalent in India, and that they should have made personal investigations into the creed or practices of Hindus. The writings of Max Müller, Monier Williams, Alfred Lyall and others have no doubt thrown considerable light on religious life and thought in India, but if our Missionaries are to understand the ideas, feelings and drift of thought of the natives of India, nothing is so necessary as personal contact with the people. For this, all false ideas of race-superiority should be put aside, and every attempt made to come into intimate personal contact with the natives. Nor is this an utter impossibility. The success that has attended the efforts of the Oxford and Cambridge brotherhoods at Calcutta and Delhi, respectively, clearly shews that the social gulf between Europeans and Natives is not after all so wide as to be unbridgeable. Says the *Quarterly Review* :—

“ However difficult the task of thus entering into the Hindu mind, there is a remarkable consensus of opinion that the work is urgent as well as indispensable. The extraordinary political and social changes wrought in India through its relations with England; the widespread education, bringing with it into India every phase of European thought; the rapid dissemination amongst a subject race, vain of its thin veneer of Western Science, of the levelling and democratic tendencies now so prevalent through Europe, with the bias towards a secular and material utilitarianism rather than a high ideal of self-sacrifice and holiness—all these are helping to shake the fabric of Hinduism to its foundations without substituting Christianity in its place. Sir Alfred Lyall, who has described more

graphically than any other statesman the working of these disturbing forces, still thinks it not unlikely that a great revival of Brahminism may yet occur. He holds, in opposition to Max Müller, that Brahminism is still a living and a growing creed; that to regard it as dead or dying is to miscalculate the power of the enemy; and that whilst India will most likely be the amphitheatre in which the decisive battle between the religions of the world will be fought out, those who go to war there for many a day take Brahminism into their strategic calculation."

Among other hindrances to the spread of Christianity, stands foremost the insuperable barrier of caste. People in Western lands have hardly any conception of how deeply engrained is the spirit of Caste in the mind of every Hindu. "Despite the law which enjoins perfect religious liberty, fanaticism is perpetually breaking out into personal violence, and most high caste converts make open confession of Christianity at serious risk of their lives, outrageous persecution alternates with pathetic entreaty. Wives threaten to repudiate their husbands; mothers commit suicide on the baptism of their children. The sternest boycotting pursues a recreant. Every malignant device is exhausted to bring about a relapse or to cover the neophyte with shame." Another great hindrance to the spread of Christianity is the attitude of the British Government towards Christianity. The neutrality of Government in matters relating to religion is a strange puzzle to Hindus as well as Muhammadans, for to them politics and religion are not two entirely distinct things. If a Government does not propagate a religion, then there is something radically wrong in that religion. We cannot wonder that the masses in India regard a creed as incomprehensible or unimportant about which the Government which professes it is absolutely neutral, whilst it legislates for the promotion of the public health and education, exerts all its energies to suppress infanticide or cholera, and spares no pains to alleviate the miseries of inundations and

famines. Not only this; it is a known fact that the British Government is not only neutral but adverse in most instances to the spread of Christianity. This also the Hindus are not slow to take note of.

But, despite these and other hindrances, Mission work in India is full of promise. We allude elsewhere to the statistics of Missions quoted by Dr. George Smith. Here, however, we refer to a single fact. It is exactly a century since Carey, the first English Missionary, embarked for India, where he found a languishing Mission with a few thousand converts. Sixty years later the Protestant Indian Christians numbered nearly a hundred thousand. Now, (1892) they are considerably over half a million.

In this connection we publish elsewhere a thoughtful paper on the same subject in which the problem of the conversion of India is discussed from a totally different standpoint.

We should now consider the subject from another standpoint. If by conversion is meant a genuine change of heart produced by a living faith in Christ, then it must be said that the conversion of India is a most difficult problem. The Hindus, as has been observed already, may, as individuals or bodies, accept the Christian religion; but hardly any great number will give evidence of that unmistakable change of heart—such as we notice in Christian congregations whenever a conversion takes place. For such conversion, we must wait long and with patience. We never witness even one in our life time. These words may sound strange. But I shall adduce a few considerations which, I think, will bear me out in my assertion.

1. The conditions necessary for conversion, properly so called, do not exist in India. We must of course omit rare cases—perhaps one in a hundred or a thousand—and consider only what is general. The soil must be prepared for the germinating of the seed. What we meet with when going out to sow, is wayside, and rock and jungle—not *good* ground.

Some even think that India must first go through the Old Testament stage before the New can be placed within its reach. In other words, Hindus, like the Jews, must first be led through a course of severe moral discipline. This may be considered an extreme view. Still, the fact remains. Many servants of God will testify with sorrow that, in spite of many years of faithful labour, they have seldom come across cases of real conversion.

2. In almost every case of baptism there is a mysterious connection between the baptism and some sort of aid to the recipient. The aid may be of various kinds ; but it almost invariably precedes or succeeds the 'conversion.' Usually baptism and money go together. There may be a motive leading the convert to seek a better God or a better religion. But to this motive, there cling one or more other motives of an earthly nature. The philosophy of mixed motives resulting in a radical change of heart must be an interesting inquiry. But Christ's words are clear : " Let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." And where this evidence is wanting, the conversion must be disclaimed.

3. As regards the Church that has already been gathered, the question may very properly be asked, if nominal or real Christianity is its general characteristic. As some would object to applying the moral test, we shall make use of another. Is the Indian Church manifesting any missionary zeal? Are there churches in any part of India which, without extraneous influences or outward pressure, are of their own accord seeking to spread the Gospel? In a word, is the life expanding itself? We see this illustrated in every plant and tree. If this question cannot be answered in the affirmative, the conclusion is inevitable that either there is no life or the little life that is, is a mere struggle for existence. Thus from the past 'conversion' of India we may infer the future.

4. The huge and complicated missionary system with which the Hindus are so familiar, seems to aim rather at the

outward and nominal than the inward and real conversion of India. Preaching is either omitted or performed by proxy. In most cases it is mercenary; and where it is earnest, it is ineffective. Every form of work is eagerly adopted—schools, industry, Zenana work, medical missions, &c. All this is good in its own way. But it must be borne in mind that all this is only preparatory work. The Pauline method was the ideal method. It sought conversion alone; it laboured for it alone; and it gained its end.

The effort to *convert* India suffers considerably from the fact that it is after all a foreign enterprise, involving all the disadvantages connected with such an undertaking. In conversion, there is a human as well as divine instrumentality. The human, to be successful, must fulfil such conditions as deep sympathy, an intimate knowledge of the Indian mind and thought, persuasive language, patient and long-suffering endeavour, and an ever burning love for the soul it seeks to convert. Now these conditions cannot be expected to be fulfilled by a foreign mind of the average type. There is a limit to human capacity. And, however devoted and self-denying the foreign worker may be, his sympathy and zeal cannot stand a double strain. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And so naturally and unconsciously the comparatively easy method of nominal, numerical conversion quietly usurps the place of direct effort. Add to this the impatience of the Churches which raise the money and send out the men. They cannot wait. Thrilling stories of conversion must be related to awaken zeal, which means more liberal contributions to the mission funds.

6. In a discussion of this nature, one cannot help noticing the change which has come over modern preaching. Whatever the case may be in Europe and America, in India preaching is very different from what it used to be years ago. Vicarious atonement is seldom insisted upon, while the necessity for an *immediate* acceptance of the Saviour is delegated to

the Salvationist. Why, now-a-days preachers think it unfashionable to warn sinners that if they die unrepenting they will go to Hell. Who like Felix trembles, or as the R. V. reads, "is terrified" at a Paul reasoning of the judgment to come? Thus by insisting on the ethical and æsthetic features of salvation, a great stimulus to instantaneous conversion is lost sight of. "Accept Christ as your Saviour, but there is no particular hurry for it." This is about the style of modern preaching.

Let us now glance at the way in which our Master viewed the conversion of his countrymen. It is a remarkable fact that Christ's preaching of three short years produced something like 500 converts—a fact that ought to fill our hearts with both delight and despair. But, if we study closely the character of the apostles who had the rare privilege of being constantly in contact with the Master for whose discipleship they had forsaken all, we shall find that mixed motives had combined to lead them to His feet, and that they were not at once converted in the sense in which we understand it. Their conversion takes place later on. It is only after Pentecost, that Peter turns a new leaf, *i. e.*, spiritually.

Our Lord of course insisted upon genuine conversion and lost no opportunity of impressing its necessity, both in season and out of season, on his disciples and hearers. But, at the same time, he discarded not what I have termed outward conversion. To do good to both body and soul—this indeed was His meat and drink. He did not, however, put the cart before the horse, but kept each in its legitimate place and neglected neither. This was the broad outline of the Saviour's policy. The people who sought Him were led merely by a desire to obtain bodily benefit: but they returned home *doubly* benefited. Sometimes they even starved themselves in order to feed on the manna that dropped from His lips. Thus while the Lord aimed at conversion as the goal of His life and labours, He made use of outward conversion as a means and a way towards a real

change of heart. The wayside or the rock, He was perfectly aware, would yield no fruit; but he turned them into good fruitful soil. The Son of man received those who resorted to Him and helped them not so much according to the measure of His love and power as that of their trust and capacity. Even the Jews, with all their national sense of sin, and deep moral susceptibilities, were not capable of unalloyed spiritual motives. But our Lord gave credit to the very act of their seeking Him, which he knew had cost them some struggle and some sacrifice, and which again implied some trust and some confidence, however small. And He was not mistaken.

From the foregoing considerations, it seems that God is in His wisdom and mercy bringing about the conversion of India very much in the same way as Christ brought about the conversion of His disciples. For it is desirable to bear in mind the great truth that, notwithstanding the diversity of our views, and the inefficiency of our methods on the one hand, and the peculiarities and prejudices of the Hindus on the other, it is the Saviour who sits at the helm and guides the great ark of missionary enterprise in India. As in faith and practice, so also in work and policy, let us look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our salvation. Let us not despise or distrust those who are willing to throw up their gods and seek baptism, even if we see that they desire our help as well. The fact that the hope of earthly good does *not* induce every Hindu to forsake his religion ought to be significant. Along with a desire for aid or gain, if there is also a desire for something better for the inner man, let us receive such and baptize them. Statisticians state that half the human population dies in infancy; that is, within the fifth year after birth. There is the same danger in the spiritual world also. Let us therefore take the greatest care of these 'babes' in the church and see that they succumb not to the operation of this natural law, and die for want of proper nursing and care. Let us not mistake mere philan-

thropy for Gospel work and commit the blunder of curing the symptoms while the root of the disease is not attacked.

At the same time, there should be no criticisms whatever of one another's methods of work. Each missionary must be left to his conscience and his God. If one is content to prepare the soil and expects no real conversions even in the near future, his policy should not be criticized for want of what is termed results; similarly, if another worker takes candidates at their word and reports frequent and numerous baptisms, his method is not to be held up as a model for all other workers. Both forms of work are merely preparatory to the genuine, individual conversion that is yet to follow. The one thing needful for every missionary is to keep this great aim steadily in view, so that whatever is attempted or achieved, the *conversion* of India, in the truest sense of the word, whether in the near or remote future, is at once the burden of his life and the goal of his labours.

## 7. CHRIST AND INDIA.

India looks upon Christ as an Englishman, and on Christianity as a religion of European origin. The terms "Christian" and "European" have become synonymous in this country. Although Palestine is not in Europe, the fact that Christ has been introduced into India by Europeans, at least during the past few centuries, accounts in some measure for this very general misconception. Not that the Hindu is ignorant of the fact that Christianity is an Asiatic religion, but there are other circumstances which prevent his separating it from European associations. The Bible best known to him is in the English language. The Christian literature, with which the educated Hindu is acquainted, is the production of English authors. The leading teachers and preachers of the religion of Christ are mostly European. Its churches and chapels are anything but Asiatic in appearance



or architecture, while the mode of worship performed within these sanctuaries and the music which accompanies it bespeak a purely Western style and taste. Considerations like these force themselves on the Hindu mind, which has consequently become accustomed to regard Christ as European, and His religion as a system of thought and practice interwoven with the genius and culture of European nations. The effect is obvious. The mere mention of Christ's name creates a feeling of fear and dislike. It is, however, a singular, and, to some extent, unaccountable fact that while almost all other things connected with Europe, its laws and literature, its institutions, industries, its peoples and politics, nay, even its manners and customs, provoke the admiration and engage the attention of educated Hindus, its religion alone should be treated with perfect indifference, often amounting to positive aversion. But there are other and more essential considerations which ought to bring Christ nearer to India and make His character and claims a subject of earnest inquiry and intense interest to thoughtful Hindus: considerations, the acceptance of which would divest Him of His European garb, and dissociate from His person much of that foreign element with which a Western civilization has necessarily surrounded Him. In this lecture, therefore, only such aspects of Christ's life and work will be represented as have a more or less direct bearing on India, its peoples, and religion.

Jesus Christ was, to begin with, an Asiatic. Palestine and India are portions of the self-same continent. Whatever may be the importance and influence of Europe in modern times, or the achievements of its classic nations in antiquity, Asia has a glory and renown of its own. It is the largest and most populous of the continents. Tradition points to Asia as the first abode of man, while history represents her as the mother of the greatest nations and religions of the world. The sacred books which hold millions under their sway, including even enlightened Europe, were all composed on Asiatic soil.

It was the highlands of Asia which formulated the speech that gave birth to the most polished tongues on earth. In this Asiatic fame, the Jew and the Hindu have an equal share. To the Hindu, therefore, Christ is a brother, not a foreigner; a welcome friend, not a suspicious alien; a fellow-countryman hailing but from another portion of the same continent.

The Jew and the Hindu are also members of the great Eastern branch of the human family. The civilized world has long been divided into the East and the West. It would be interesting to know the precise period at which this distinction was thought out and formulated. The distinction, however, is one that is based on complexion, costume, and manners and customs, as well as on certain traits of character. A marked difference of these has led to the well-known division of nations into Oriental and Occidental. It is as easy to distinguish an Eastern from a Western character as an Asiatic turban from a European hat. Complexion, no doubt, plays an important part in this classification. And hence, it is that while the Western nations are called the white races, those of the East are termed the coloured or dark races. And so they are. Christ of course, belonged to the latter class. And to the Hindu it must be most gratifying to contemplate that it is a member of his own race, termed dark by Western nations (ethnologically, of course) that has raised Europe to its present eminence and given it a civilization which the rest of the world is striving to imitate. He must be proud of the fact that it is to an Oriental teacher, the polished peoples of Europe bend their knees in devout adoration. At this very moment it is an Asiatic—known as the “carpenter of Nazareth”—that presides over the destinies of Europe, whilst it is His disciples who constitute its salt, which preserves its peace and prosperity and gives a beneficent turn to the tide of politics in that mighty continent. And even in Europe itself, it is only those parts of it which submit to the sway and are guided by the inspiration of the Asiatic Christ, that show out

in bold relief as the brightest spots in the Western world. It is also a significant fact that the discovery recently made by philological research that "God made of one blood all nations"—one by which the East and the West are fused into one great family, is one that was announced at a European seat of learning as an authoritative fact by an Asiatic apostle of this Asiatic Church, ages before the science of philology was born. And being reminded of these great and glorious facts will the Indian Asiatic pass by the person of Christ with indifference or treat His claims with contempt? It is indeed a matter of regret no less than surprise, that while Europe has hastened to welcome the stranger, Asia recedes before the noblest and greatest of her own children.

Christ again approaches the Hindu not only as a member of the Eastern race, but with a language and style of thought and expression quite familiar to the latter. In His voice, as it comes softening down the distance of twenty centuries, we recognise the distinctive futures of an Oriental Guru. It is in fact our own countryman that is addressing us. Like most, if not all, of our greatest Asiatic teachers, He spoke much, but wrote nothing. His very attitude reminds us of Eastern customs. Whether on a mountain slope, or lowland plain, in a boat at sea or by the wayside well, or in a private house or synagogue, He is seated while he instructs. His treatment of His disciples was characterized by a familiarity and friendship peculiar to Eastern nations. Though He truly "spoke as never man spoke," yet He as truly spoke like an Asiatic. For His mode of speech, His figures and similes, His parables and discourses, His descriptions of natural phenomena, His use of proverbs, His quotations from the 'Shastras' of His people, clearly indicate an Eastern and not a Western culture and characteristics of thought. It is a remark often made but seldom understood, that expressions and allusions in that truly Eastern book—the Bible—which are with much difficulty made out by Western students, present little or none to East-

ern readers. For example, the reference to the man carrying his sheep on his shoulder, women drawing water at a well or grinding at a mill, a little leaven leavening the whole lump, treasure hid in a field, washing the hands before meals, children calling to one another in the market place, and notably the well-known parable of the Prodigal Son, are things with which Hindus have been familiar from their very childhood. Speaking thus with an Asiatic accent and Indian idiom, Christ must be a most agreeable teacher to an Eastern people like the Hindus, while His words of truth and love, falling as they do from the unseen universe, must be pondered over by every earnest son of India.

A striking resemblance between Judaism and Hinduism affords another reason why Hindus should carefully examine the claims of Christ. The resemblance is by no means perfect. It cannot be in the nature of things. A certain writer regards Judaism as a religion of hope, and Heathenism as one of despair. We should class Hinduism with the former rather than with the latter. Not only are there many outward points of similarity between Jews and Hindus, such as may be seen in the structure of their temples, their feasts and fasts, their rites and ceremonies, and the union of the social and religious elements in their outward life, there are far more important features in the inner religious life of the two nations, the mutual resemblance of which cannot escape the earnest student of both the systems. Attention may be invited to just two or three essential points. The Jew had forebodings of the immortality of the human spirit. And like him the Hindu hopes to live after death, though led by speculation (from which the former was saved by divine interposition), he has formulated the doctrine of endless births. The atonement was a favourite theme with the Jew. In addition to the sin offerings of individual Jews, the High Priest performed one great atoning sacrifice once a year for the whole nation. Similarly, expiation for sin has ever been an important ele-

ment in the religious systems of India. From time immemorial has *Pryaschittamy* or atonement expressed itself in countless various ways in this ancient land. And as to the central doctrine of *avatars*, the Jew and the Hindu are quite at one. T Formbeer looked forward to the advent of the Messiah, the Saviour who should "deliver His people from their sins." The Hindu, likewise, has never ceased to be blessed with a vision of the gods on earth. Every time a renowned hero appeared on the scene and saved a persecuted party or people, the Hindu regarded his advent as a descent of the Supreme Being. Thus, we read of nine incarnations of Vishnu alone, but even this has not satisfied the avatar-loving Hindu; and for good reasons. A tenth incarnation is yet to appear, "when Vishnu mounted on a white horse, with a drawn scimitar, blazing like a comet, will end this present age by destroying the world, and then renovating creation by an age of purity." Even the Rig Veda refers to Prajapati, the lord of creatures, who should offer himself as a sacrifice for the universe. These, then, are a few of the principal features of resemblance between these two great Eastern religions.

Now, Christ, who appeared to the Jew as the expected fulfiller of his hopes and aspirations, approaches the Hindu in a similar capacity and with precisely the same claims. The words He addressed to His fellow-countrymen, "I am not come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy but fulfil," exactly describe His relations to whatever is true in Hinduism. He is not its antagonist as is usually supposed, but its true friend and fulfiller. Viewed in the light which He throws on the spiritual and moral world, some of the root ideas of Hinduism receive a new significance and become the basis of an entirely fresh superstructure. The Hindu should, therefore, look within the veil of Hinduism, clearing away the mist which centuries of religious stagnation or perverse activity have gathered around it, and grasping these root ideas, judge for himself if Christ does not ful-

fil what it has expected and supply what it has sought ; or, to put it in Hindu language, if He is not Himself the long-awaited tenth Avatar renovating creation by an age of purity.

But Christ commonly meets with the same treatment here as He received from the hands of His own countrymen. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Though a few devout souls burst out with joy, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God", the majority of the people misunderstood His mission and said in effect : "We have Moses and the Prophets." To come nearer home, the hoary antiquity of the *Srutis* and the complex multiplicity of the *Smritis* stand as mighty obstacles in the way of the Hindu. But true to his spiritual instincts, he should rather endeavour to penetrate the dense darkness which surrounds modern Hinduism and catch the spirit of the ancient sages. A Brahman who has spent a life-time in the study of the Hindu and Christian scriptures in their original tongues, and on whom the Metropolitan University deemed it fit to confer its highest honor, remarked that an earnest Hindu must end as an earnest Christian, evidently meaning thereby that the practice of truths possessed, however small, leads to the acceptance of truths more complete.

Leaving out of consideration Muhammadanism as a mere perversion or corruption of Christianity, and Buddhism as the product of Indian religious thought, it seems to us that Hinduism is the only great national religion in the world. Originating as all religions do and must, in a feeling of dependence and a moral consciousness inherent in the race, the gigantic structure of Hinduism has been raised with the help of reason led wild by passion and fancy, but it has signally failed to afford that shelter to its inmates which it originally intended to do. But no sooner does the Hindu take his stand on the original foundations of his religion than his transition from Hinduism

to Christianity becomes easy and natural. From this vantage ground of truth he sees the way to Christ straight and clear. And well may he exclaim in a slightly modified form : " God who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." Would that all reformers of Hinduism took this natural and reasonable view of religious philosophy, and, abandoning the unprofitable task of pruning its branches, rather go deep down to the roots of their systems and discover the path which leads from Hinduism, pure and simple, to the Cross of Calvary, like the star which led the Wise Men of Persia to the Manger at Bethlehem. Still the wonder is that an accommodating system like Hinduism, which has given many a Dravidian demon and aboriginal goddess honourable niches in its pantheon, refuses its homage to the holiest Asiatic that ever trod this earth.

As a contribution to the sum total of religious knowledge, Christ's claims ought to be pre-eminent, especially in a country like India, where religious research has been the chief characteristic of its people. In a recent controversy between Mr. Gladstone and Professor Huxley regarding the Mosaic cosmogony, the latter gentleman tried to deprecate discussions on such subjects and cut short the controversy by quoting the following well-known words of the prophet Micah :—" And what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" The great sceptic suggested that the practice of what are called justice, mercy, love, and humility was the " chief end of man," and that any person could practise them, be he Christian or Sceptic, Turk or Chinese. But the veteran Christian statesman took the professor at his word and demanded an accurate and exhaustive definition of each of these simple-looking terms. And who could explain their full import or illustrate all that they mean? They are microcosms in themselves. " What is truth " ? said jesting Pilate ; and the world repeats

the question in one form or another. And what are love and mercy and humility? Whence their authority? Why should men practise them at all? And if they should, could they practise these virtues to their own satisfaction? When definitions differ, as they do, and opinions clash against each other, who is to judge and pronounce the verdict? India has long had its share in speculating upon these and other problems. It has been her special delight to define the Deity, dive into the origin of evil, and discover a way of escape for the soul from its woeful grasp. *Pati, Pasu, Pasam*,—God, soul, and sin; these are the ever-recurring terms of Indian theology. But that this attempt has been a total failure in India as in all other countries where similar efforts have been made is evident from such typical sacred books as the *Rig Veda* among *Śrūtis* and the *Vishnu Purana* among the *Itihasas*. Beyond ejaculatory prayers addressed to the elements for material benefits, ever-varying mythical accounts of creation and recreation, and fruitless conjectures concerning the nature of the Supreme Being, interspersed with “grains of gold in heaps of sand,” they furnish no reliable information on which the human soul could rest satisfied. It is all doubt and dreary speculation. But Christ appears on the scene “in the fulness of time”, and claiming to have come down from heaven as the embodiment of Divinity, authoritatively asserts: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” Startling words these. Earth and heaven are alike familiar to Him. In Him again virtue is translated from the abstract into the concrete, while in Him also truth, mercy and humility obtain their fullest illustration. And to each seeking soul He gives a glimpse of the other life and points the way to it when he says: “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live.” Thus, for once in the history of the world, an Asiatic asserts Himself as the true solution of all those great problems which have agitated Indians in bygone ages. Astounding as these claims are,



they are nevertheless worthy of being carefully considered by every one who calls himself an Asiatic and wishes to tread in the footsteps of his fathers.

Even as regards the social problems which are puzzling the minds of ardent reformers, India, it seems, cannot do without Christ. The very work of reform is to be traced to His influence. The great flood of light He has cast upon the country has revealed to reflecting minds many a blot in the social as well as the religious practices of the people. His is the only force which quickens the national mind to a sense of its evils and wrongs. A fluttering movement is making itself visible in the "dry bones" of India. The Brahmo Somaj is itself a result of the contact of Christianity with Hinduism. The education and emancipation of women and other reforms are being loudly agitated for. While the Vedas and the Codes are searched in vain for sanction, legislative co-operation is besought with little better success. Having thus originated these weighty forces, which are but the expression of the liberty the nation has begun to long for, Christ steps forward and offers a ready and radical remedy for all India's evils. "If ye continue in my word," says He, "then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." For the disciple of Christ is a free man—socially as well as religiously. The moment a Hindu accepts Christ as his Master, his social fetters fall to pieces and he begins to breathe the air of true liberty. Happy then is the reformer who takes Christ as his guide, and thrice happy he who surrenders himself entirely to the Lord of love and liberty.

In stirring times like these when India is in transition, and with its national life awakened, it asserts itself in various ways, constitutional or otherwise, and agitates in eloquent terms for the rights and privileges of its people: the desire for a peaceful and reliable guide begins to be greatly felt. The "eternal verities of truth and justice" have to be studied in their essence as well as the countless modes in which they

affect a nation's welfare. An ethical standard—a criterion of right and wrong—has to be discovered and enforced. The highest national welfare has to be defined and methods devised to promote it. The various conflicting forces which are at work in the social mechanism have to be controlled and regulated so as to converge towards the desired goal. In undertaking a task so stupendous, and withal so desirable, what better guide can Indian statesmen find than the Prophet of Nazareth who stands behind all European politics, promoting the good, and purifying the evil among nations? What safer guide than the meek Asiatic who once changed the condition of falling Europe and gave it a fresh lease of life—from whom statesmen receive their inspiration and reformers their power?

Christ has already begun to influence the country, through the various agencies. His disciples have set agoing in the principal centres of India. He is leavening the masses, infusing new truth into the minds of the young, opening up higher and purer ideals of life, and revealing ends and aims to which the people have hitherto been perfect strangers. In a word, He is reconstituting society in India. No less true is it now than it was twenty centuries ago that "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." In every change for good, in every earnest reform, in every struggle for a purer morality, and in every longing for individual liberty, "His holy footprints we can trace." We even take the liberty of asserting that it is not so much the Hindu or even the Utilitarian as the Christian standard of morals that is beginning to obtain among the educated classes of India.

It would, however, be a sad mistake to suppose that Christianity and civilization are identical. The shell is not to be taken for the kernel. Though there can be no Christianity without a resultant civilization, there can yet be a great deal of civilization without any Christianity. A genuine civilization follows the acceptance of Christ as surely as a corollary its proposition, but civilization as such can no more be developed

into true religion than a triangle by becoming more perfect transform itself into a square. India may reach a high standard of civilization. Many a blot in the social system may be wiped away. Its religion may be reformed, its superstitions may vanish, its idols may be thrown to the "moles and bats," and its people may be made more manly and enlightened—in fact, the moral-tone of the nation may be greatly improved—and yet Christ find no place in the hearts of the individuals. The social effect of Christianity may, in a great measure, be realized in the material advancement of the people, but its lodgment is in the heart alone, whence it flows like the "river, the streams whereof make glad the City of God." Christ should never be confounded with a reformer of religions or of peoples. He comes claiming the homage of the heart and will of every individual Bindu. He is, in Indian phraseology, the *Paramatma* seeking entire possession of the *Jivātma*. If India, therefore, is intent on a civilization worth the name—one that would proceed from within, and work upwards till it reaches its goal in heaven,—she should examine the claims of the Asiatic, who says: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you."

Once more. As a necessary link between the East and the West, the claims of Christ are worth recognition by Hindus. We have already referred to the great division of the race into Oriental and Occidental. And this ancient line of demarcation is nowhere more clearly discerned, than in India itself, the best type and representative of the East. By a singular dispensation of Providence, England and India have been brought into close contact. It is nothing less than the meeting of two mighty streams diametrically opposed in their natural characteristics—the one deep, slow, restless, and turbid, the other clear, swift, swelling and powerful, carrying everything before it. Consequently, union is difficult. The gulf between the two nations is far wider than that between Saxons and Normans for a time on English soil. But while the latter gulf was

bridged within the short space of two centuries and a half, the former seems only to widen with the advance of time. The barriers to free intercourse are formidable, if not insuperable. The very genius of Hinduism is utterly against all intercourse with those beyond its pale. The social reformer stands aghast at the impregnability of the citadel. Willing members of the West find it fruitless to approach the Hindu any nearer than the cold civilities of the court will allow. That a free intercourse is desirable is admitted on all hands. A link that could rivet the two chains into one is a felt necessity. And Christ claims to be that link. He undertakes to unite the East with the West. For "in Him there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, but Christ in all, and in all." A common allegiance to a common Lord cannot but create a feeling of fraternity and draw the East and the West into a happy union.

The last consideration we would urge is the comparatively long time during which Christ's name has been proclaimed in India. Although it is only about four centuries since that preaching and planting of Missions was begun by Europeans, tradition points to a time far more remote. It is said that St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Christ, planted Churches on the Western Coast. At all events the Gospel was proclaimed in India as early as in England. It is even suggested that incidents in the Gospel narrative as well as Christian truths, have thus found their way into the religious literature of India. London is no more the centre of the terrestrial hemisphere than Palestine was of the civilized world when Christianity first began to be propagated. And starting from this most convenient centre, the religion of Christ spread rapidly over Southern Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia. Ere long a diocese was formed in Persia, which was followed by one in "India." Though opinions may differ as to the exact time when Christians first entered this country, it must, nevertheless, be admitted that during many long centuries, India, at least the

Southern portion of it, has been familiar with the name, if not the life and work of Christ. The following verses, evidently an allusion to the Christian incarnation are from an old Tamil poem attributed to Agastyar :—

“Worship thou the Light of the Universe; who is One;  
Who made the world in a moment, and placed good men in it;  
Who afterwards himself dawned upon the earth as a Guru;  
Who without wife or family, as a hermit performed austerities;  
Who appointing loving *Siddhas* to succeed him,  
Departed again into Heaven :—Worship Him.”

It is therefore high time now that India laid aside her prejudice and indifference and treated the claims of Christ with the attention and respect they deserve. Within three centuries the mighty Roman empire acknowledged the supremacy of the religion it at first attempted to crush. Within longer or shorter periods the Gothic nations successively rallied round the Cross of Christ. And in more recent times many a savage island has been drawn within the pale of Christendom. “The Story of Madagascar; its Mission and its Martyrs,” is a well known work. At this very moment Japan has under consideration a proposal to adopt Christianity as its national religion. Will India alone—religious India, the land of sages and *rishis*, nearer to Christ than any other country, and one that ought to understand and appreciate His claims much more readily than enterprising England, sentimental France, plodding Germany, and savage Madagascar—resist the loving appeals of the Crucified Asiatic who has stood so long with the offer of peace and power—peace with God and power for good? The patriot cries “India for the Indians;” but with apparently less enthusiasm the Christian Preacher responds, “India for Christ.” Yes, if India be for Christ, she shall also be for the Indians.

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## 8. THE INFLUENCE OF THEOSOPHY IN INDIA.

In order to estimate aright the influence of the theosophic movement in India, a brief survey of its history and its present condition is very desirable. The Society was founded in New York by Madame Blavatsky in 1875, with only four members, of whom but one survives, *viz.*, Col. Olcott, its President for life. The object of the Society is three-fold: first, to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour; secondly, to encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science; and thirdly, to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man. To this, however, a proviso is added that the Society "has no concern with politics, caste rules, and social observances. It is unsectarian, and demands no assent to any formula of belief as a qualification of membership."

The infant Society with so attractive a propaganda does not seem to have met with favour in the land of its birth, at least at the commencement; for three years later, we find Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott in India, meeting with a warm welcome from the educated Hindus of Bombay. They found a more congenial sphere in India, with its developed minds craving for fresh mental food, and a surer footing for their spiritual aspirations. Eventually Madras was selected as the best spot for the theosophical banner, and a site was obtained at Adyar where the Head-quarters are now permanently located. Madame Blavatsky was a commanding personage with a powerful magnetic personality. Though suspected as a Russian spy, she persevered and endured much for her cause. The writer had the pleasure of an interview with her in 1884. Educated Hindus simply quailed in her presence, and were ready to obey her even against their will. One remark of hers I cannot forget. Referring to certain attacks in the local papers on her character and motives, she said, "I shall gladly receive a

slap from George Bowen of Bombay, but cannot endure the attacks of the other missionaries." The Society, however, received a sudden and all but crushing shock soon afterwards, when the *Madras Christian College Magazine* published certain letters of the Foundress and exposed the frauds connected with the appearances of *Mahatmas* and other miraculous phenomena at Adyar. The Madame did nothing in self-defence, even when challenged to prosecute, but ere long returned to Europe and published her great work, the "*Secret Doctrine*." But fortunately for the dying movement, shortly before the death of the Foundress, Mrs. Besant, then well known as a leader of Atheists, was rather suddenly converted to Theosophy. The mantle of Blavatsky thus fell on the shoulders of Besant, and Theosophy received a fresh lease of life.

The Society is now only thirty years old and barely that in this country. And yet the success it has achieved in this comparatively brief period is something marvellous, considering the number of countries it has enlisted in its support, and the large annual accessions to its membership. In a pamphlet entitled — "Is Theosophy Anti-Christian?", Mrs. Besant speaks of the "ever-increasing number of clergy of the Church of England, as well as of the other churches of Christendom, and of the ever-increasing number of the faithful laity of the churches who are embracing the theosophical ideas, and who regard them as helpful and illuminating." Taking for my authority, the latest Report of the Society, that for 1904, I find that it has a total of 325 branches in the world, of which 198 or rather more than half, belong to India. It must be near 400 now. The other branches are scattered over America, that is the United States, Great Britain, Scandinavia, The Netherlands, France, Italy, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand. Strange to say, there is not a single branch in Russia, though the Foundress was the daughter of a Russian governor. The Report does not furnish complete statistics of membership. But judging from the figures given for a few countries, such

as America with its 2,300 members, Scandinavia, with 648, Holland with 727, New Zealand with 261, and India showing an increase of 611 in 1904, the total number of members must be very large, as also the annual increase.

The Society is well organised and possesses an excellent constitution. As already stated, the Head-quarters are established at Adyar, the southernmost suburb of Madras. Any seven members may be formed into a Branch, by receiving a charter from the President, for which the fee is £1. Eight hundred and fifteen such charters were issued in 1904. Any seven chartered Branches of the same country or province may be formed into a Section. All members of such Branches or Sections have to pay an annual fee of 5s., plus a similar amount as entrance fee, or commute the same by a single payment of Rs. 50. The fact that out of the 198 Indian Branches as many as 90 are termed "dormant," proves that the retention of membership as well as an organic connection with the Society is, in this country, a costly affair. Each Section pays into the General Treasury one-fourth of the total amount received from annual dues and entrance fees, utilizing the balance for local purposes. The accounts are audited annually by qualified persons. Apart from the sums raised and spent by the Branches—which must be very large—moneys received for the various funds at Head-quarters amounted in 1904 to upwards of four lakhs of rupees. This includes several permanent funds. These figures show the hold the Society has upon the general public. Beyond stable expenses, neither the President nor the other officials of the Society seem to receive salaries for their services. The officials are mostly foreigners to whom such services are evidently a labour of love. Numerically and financially, therefore, the Society is doing remarkably well, and is on this account becoming a powerful organisation in the world.

But this is not enough. We should go beneath the surface, and try to gauge its influence behind rupees, annas, and pies.



Superficially its influence extends from Iceland, where a theosophical book has been published, down to Invercargill in New Zealand, the most southerly town in the world. The Hindu College at Benares, founded and maintained by the enthusiasm and eloquence of Mrs. Besant—to which I have been told an Indian gentleman of this city has contributed half a lakh—is significant of theosophic influence on the Indian purse.

With a view, therefore, to come nearer home and ascertain the moral and spiritual influence the movement exerts in this country, in which by the way so many forces are at work side by side without producing any great or tangible results, letters were written to about thirty missionaries residing and working in the principal cities and towns of India, requesting information regarding the progress of the movement—as a spiritual force—in their town and neighbourhood. Of the many replies received, only a few typical ones are quoted in full or in part.

Mr. H. T. Wills, of Trevandrum, writes: "At present I know nothing of the local doings. There are only some half a dozen members and they keep very quiet and I do not fancy they are doing much." Mr. Wills' work is chiefly among students. The Rev. Canon Goldsmith writes as follows from Hyderabad:—"There is 'Theosophical Society' written over a small insignificant door on a road here, but we do not hear or see anything of the Theosophists, whose Anti-Christian or propagandist work seems in the hands of the local Arya Samaj." The Rev. E. P. Rice, who comes into frequent contact with the educated in Bangalore, says, "I have nothing of importance to communicate to you. I do not think the movement is strong here, but of course there are many who sympathize with anything that promises to rehabilitate Hinduism." In an interesting letter the Rev. Dr. Chamberlain, of Vellore, writes as follows: "I made enquiries personally of those who are known in the town and district as Theosophists and others. I find that two Branches have been in operation in the District. . . . I do not think it can be said that the *influence*

*extends beyond the members.* They claim for it a tolerant influence on their own lives and an opposition to narrow restrictions. A feeling of brotherly love is enkindled among them, they claim, but there are no evidences of its manifestation in organised life. I think its characteristics are more those of a private literary club, where the members meet together for the discussion of congenial religious subjects. There is no *outward* activity as an influence upon the community. With regard to progress, I do not think there has been any of late. A visit from Mrs. Besant or a Haskell Lecturer might call the members of the Theosophical Society into evidence, but ordinarily there has not been growth as a characteristic of its life."

Benares is the educational Head-quarters of the Society, where Mrs. Besant resides during her stay in India. The flourishing Central Hindu College up there, with its 480 students drawn from all parts of India, may be regarded as the nursery for theosophic seedlings, intended to convert the Indian continent into a theosophic paradise. Some seven lakhs and a quarter have been collected, of which four are invested, while a lakh and a half have been spent on buildings and other permanent property. The expenditure on salaries is Rs. 3,200 a month. The College has a Magazine of its own with a circulation of 13,000 copies a month. The Principal, Dr. Richardson, receives no salary; nor does the Superintendent of the Hostel, nor even the Secretary of the College Board. Three others are honorary workers. Religious instruction is conveyed through the Sanātana Dharma Text Books, both Elementary and Advanced, the issue of which by the College "marks an epoch, as they present *Hinduism*, for the first time, as an organic whole." The Directors of Education in Bombay, Madras, and the Panjab have allowed them to be used as religious Text-books for Hindu students in Government Schools. Writing then from this Nursing home of Theosophy, the Rev. Edwin Greaves, of the London Mission, makes the following important statement: "Benares, as you know, is Mrs.

Besant's Head-quarters, and also, I fancy, of the Indian section of the Theosophical Society. As a matter of fact, however, it is not so much her position as a luminary of Theosophy but as a champion of Hinduism that gives Mrs. Besant her place in Benares. She might say—It is the esoteric interpretation of Hinduism, but there is no strong attempt to do away with the exoteric forms. A figure of Ganesh adorns the exterior of the Hindu College, apologies for and explanations of idolatry are offered instead of any endeavour being made to extirpate it." After referring to the prosperity of the College, Mr. Greaves continues: "Personally I do not attempt anything in the way of opposition—don't believe in it. I know Mrs. Besant (slightly) and the professors and some of the leading Indian supporters of the College who live in Benares, and for some of them I have a genuine esteem. I believe they are attempting to do good work according to their light.....Although by no means wishing to do so, Mrs. Besant is (I believe) doing good work for Christianity in so far as she is trying to read a higher ideal of life into the Hindu Shastras. As men grasp the conception of higher ideals of life, they must be led to feel their weakness and sin and thus a state of mind may be produced which may be more ready to recognise that Christ is alone sufficient for man's needs. 'God fulfils Himself in many ways.'"

Only one more quotation. And that is from the Rev. W. Müller of Calicut from whose long and critical letter I make a few extracts. "What is called theosophy here out in India is vastly different from what it is in Europe and America. Unless the theosophists I know hide what is regarded now-a-days as the marrow and essence of theosophy, *viz.*, all the occult and spiritistic machinations, there is little connection between theosophy as presented to India and theosophy as extant in the West. Higher forms of theosophy, marked by names like Octinger, Jakob Boehme, Swedenborg, Fr. Von Baader, also Paracelsus and many others, I omit here as not touching the

actual question..... Calicut has a Branch. The members are Brahmins and Nairs. Most of them are pleaders..... They have a library for the use of the members..... What surprised me most was to find and see extensively used two commentaries by a Hindu (Sri Paramananda) on the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John. It is very touching to see Christ's words dressed in this way for their taste, but it bears mighty testimony that the image of Christ is alive in their minds at their meetings; only eight or nine are present, and unless the Christian side attacks them, there seems to be a great lack of interest in their own cause. We must not, however, under-rate the influence of the Association. A number are drawn in who would otherwise be nearer to Christianity. The more active amongst the religious educated Hindus are called together and inspired to defend the ancestral religion..... My acquaintance with the persons and their thoughts—inadequate as such acquaintance may be—makes me trust that finally Christianity will earn the harvest these people are toiling to reap. Their attitude towards Christianity is friendly..... They are pledged to study with sympathy every religion and so also Christ's, and to take the best of each to contribute it to the coming perfect World's Religion. If this pledge is sincerely adhered to, we shall have no fear about the outcome.... Though for a while Theosophy may retard the progress of Christianity in many single cases, I believe that finally these persons will be recognised as very effective in the process of the Christianisation of India."

Through the kindness of the Rev. Dr. Jones I have obtained a copy of the latest Report of the Madura Branch, which seems to be somewhat active and vigorous. There are 61 members, of whom 41 are Fellows of the Society. They meet on Sunday mornings and either read or listen to a lecture. There is also a class for the study of theosophical literature and another for that of the Upanishads. On White Lotus day—the day set apart in memory of Madame Blavatsky—the following

were read: the Gita, the Light of Asia, the Sermon on the Mount, and extracts from the writings of Tamil Saints. They have a Tract Fund, a Prize Fund and a Hindu Girls' School Fund. A Magic Lantern was purchased for Rs. 365. Lectures are regularly delivered in the Hall of Theosophy and several publications were issued during the year. Invested funds amount to more than Rs. 3,600.

In Madras, in addition to the Head-quarters, there are two Branches, one in Mint Street and the other in Pursewalkam. But nothing is known about their activity. There was even a third in Triplicane, but this is now dormant. Regarding the work at Adyar, a correspondent of a local paper styling himself a "friendly critic," writes thus of the last Convention:—"It is a sight for gods and men to see the Head-quarters filled with men of different creeds, castes and colours, apparently representing societies in Norway in the North and in New Zealand in the South, in New York and down in Johannesburg. They have their own organs; they have their *rishis* and *chelas*; they have produced a literature of their own; and they have their preachers and orators. There is Mr. Leadbeater with a mysticism about him. He is to relate his rambles in the lands on the other side of death. We have Europeans, men and women, each with a history to relate.... The good old Col. Olcott is no doubt happy, when he finds so many men and women .... clustering round his knees year after year with affection and regard, and in all human probability he will live long to see the return of many such felicitous gatherings. He is still active and masterful. He is rearing a great library. The gods seem to favour him. He finds means somehow to carry out his beautiful and grand ideas." During the annual Convention week at Adyar, there is a great sensation among the educated classes. Admission to the lectures is by tickets at Rs. 2 each.

From the foregoing extracts as well as from the facts and figures quoted at the commencement of this paper, it is clear that the theosophic movement has during the last thirty years

attained no small degree of popularity in the educated world, in general, and, particularly in this ancient land of mixed myths and creeds. It is exerting an unmistakable influence on a certain class of thoughtful Indians, who by reason of their modern culture and scientific training have moved away from their ancestral moorings, and, unwilling or unprepared to accept an all-demanding exclusive faith like Christianity, are nevertheless yearning to secure with the least sacrifice and along the "line of least resistance," something which promises to gratify their intellectual curiosity on the one hand and their religious instincts on the other. That something happens at present to be Theosophy. The class of men described above, and for that matter even women, are to be met with all over the world. In India they are produced in increasing numbers by the Universities. And as long as men of this class exist and continue to increase year after year, so long will Theosophy continue to flourish and widen its influence in this country.

Let Mrs. Besant speak for herself. In an interview with Mr. Stead, the theosophic missionary expresses her belief in the reality of the Welsh Revival, not omitting even the phenomena of actual lights which are said to accompany the ministry of Mrs. Jones of Egryn, and adds, "The doctrine of the re-incarnation (or transmigration), which a few years ago was scoffed at, is now permeating the thought of the world. . . . I am getting on very well in India. In proof whereof the older and more rigidly orthodox of the Hindus, the Scribes and Pharisees of India, have begun to take alarm. The Christians abuse me for being too much of a Hindu, while the conservative are denouncing me as the most insidious missionary of the West who has ever threatened the ancient faith." And consequently, says the *Express*, "The disciples of Guru Paramahansa are now making impassioned appeals to the people to look only to their own leaders and to beware of the beguiling tongue of the foreign visitors."

Now the causes of this influence and popularity are not

far to seek, at least some of them. The three-fold object of the Society acts as a powerful charm on the educated Hindu ; especially is the promise of a Brotherhood something Utopian to a subject race compelled to endure the contemptuous treatment of the Anglo-Indian. To the earnest enquirer struggling to solve the problem, or "riddle" as Professor Hæckel calls it—of the Universe, the study of comparative religion is a most welcome offer. He looks forward with pleasure to spending his leisure hours in poring over the pages of 'Isis Unveiled,' 'Man Visible and Invisible,' 'Esoteric Christianity,' 'The Other side of Death' and other kindred works. The third object is especially attractive to minds traditionally mystic, and ever on the alert to take a peep at the "unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man." One cannot conceive of a society aiming at support from the thinking portion of the human race ever failing in its purpose with so popular a propaganda. The comparative cheapness of membership in the Society is another potent cause. It demands neither renunciation of ancestral faith, caste rules and social observances, nor acceptance of a new creed or ceremony. The chela, within the theosophic fold is just where he was, when without its pale. If membership costs anything at all, it is the insignificant sum of Rs. 3-12 per annum and nothing more. To a Hindu who knows the terrible sacrifice involved in the acceptance of a new faith, this cheap membership with its high-sounding promises looming in the distance and "lending enchantment to the view," is too good to be resisted. He could even add F. T. S. to his name and pass for a graduate.

The powerful eloquence of Mrs. Besant and the self-sacrificing labours of its leaders are another cause of its influence. They are always travelling, encouraging active Branches, reviving dormant ones and organising new ones, scattering theosophic literature wherever they go. And particularly with the gifted intellect and persuasive oratory of Mrs. Besant, Theosophy has a remarkable way of adapting itself to different doubters

in different lands. In England it owns allegiance to a Personal God, the Father of all, expresses its belief in the Trinity, in the vast hosts of ministering spirits, and even in the atonement and the sacred practice of prayer—though of course explaining these fundamental dogmas in its own mystical way. Bradlaugh treated Jesus as a mythical person, but Mrs. Besant “reverences Him as a Divine Teacher”; and in the same breath speaks of Vishnu as another second *Logos*. In India, on the other hand, Theosophy emphasizes an impersonal God, fatalism, pantheism and endless transmigration. It is indeed all things to all men. Can such a movement fail to be popular?

But there are also certain features which are likely to weaken the influence of the movement. Its vigorous growth, if not its very success, depends almost entirely on its foreign leaders. Its inspiration is from without, not from within. No movement can become a successful, indigenous enterprise, so long as its motive power is extraneous. The absence of its leaders kills the Branches as easily as their presence creates them. It is after all an amateur speculation, an abstruse philosophy,—not life, or inspiration, not even experience. It has many a pleasant dream for the speculative classes, but no message of hope or deliverance to the toiling masses. It is but another repetition of unaided human effort since the most ancient days to solve the problems of life now and hereafter and the origin of the Universe. But “God never meant,” says the devout poet “that man should scale the heavens by strides of human wisdom.” It is not yet a definite, compact system. It never will be. It has changed marvellously during the single generation it has existed. At present, there are as many systems as there are leaders. New sects are sure to arise sooner or later in different parts of the theosophic world. Its very first object, that of a Universal Brotherhood, must be reckoned among the unattainable. In Madras, it is beginning to be feared that this much vaunted brotherhood, though spelt on paper, is not actually lived out. “A feeling of separation



and contempt," writes the 'Friendly Critic' already quoted; "may be excused in world-wise and worldly Anglo-Indians; but a Society with the 'Brotherhood of Humanity' to justify its very existence cannot endure with the cankering notion finding a lodge in any prominent Theosophist's mind." Finally, Theosophy is only a temporary palliative to the anxious seeking soul, not a radical remedy for the expiation of sin and the ushering in of peace and rest. It lacks an ideal to inspire and a motive to live by.

Bearing in mind then what seems to us, the weak elements of a movement which is influencing the thought of educated Indians, what should be our attitude to Theosophy as propagated in this country? I think it should be one of cautious sympathy. From our own standpoint, it is a preliminary stirring up of the soil for the ultimate reception of the truth. We should remember its great ancestor, Gnosticism, in the early days of Christianity. Whatever its vagaries and misconceptions may be, every one interested in the spiritual welfare of India must view with a friendly attitude a Society which turns Hindus from indifference and infidelity to spiritual inquiry, from things carnal to things spiritual, and from the pursuit of mere wealth and pleasure to that of higher ideals of life and thought. Thirty years ago materialism was the fashionable creed of the educated classes. Now we seldom hear of an avowed atheist. So far then is Theosophy allied to the car of Christianity.

Since Theosophy is so popular and influential, we should remember that a great deal of preparatory work ought to be done before we can ever hope for a final general acceptance of truth. The forest must first be cleared of all rock and stone, rank vegetation and long standing shrubs and decayed trees. Misconceptions regarding the nature of God and man, life both present and future, the mystery of evil and its solution and other kindred topics ought to be patiently discussed and rectified. The mere announcement of salvation through the Crucified

Saviour will never suffice, at least not in India. The Hindu naturally stands aghast at the complexity of the ideas involved in these terms! A missionary brother once wrote home that he hoped within a few months to preach the Gospel to every person in his taluq.

To deal with individual, genuine theosophists, the literature bearing on the Society ought to be studied, especially that most masterly work, entitled "Studies in Theosophy" issued anonymously from the Catholic Examiner Press in Bombay. This and two other books, "An Inquiry into the Principles of Modern Theosophy" by Professor P. A. Wadia, of Poona, and "Theosophy Examined" by Dr. Ewing of Allahabad, may with advantage be recommended to Theosophist enquirers, and also placed in Libraries and Reading Rooms.

Devout Brahmos, mystic Theosophists, ardent Hindus, bigoted Aryas and patient missionaries of the Cross are each claiming the allegiance of India. But we know that a loving Father governs and guides all these forces; and India will yet become a brilliant diadem on the Saviour's bleeding brow.

## 9. THE FUTURE RELIGION OF INDIA.

To speak of the future religion of India is sufficient to make some regard the speaker as an idle dreamer or a fanatic. Even the mere possibility of a new religion for India is laughed at. To change the religion of some 250 million people into whose very being a religion more than 3,000 years old has been wrought—a religion, moreover, that has shown itself to be possessed of the most wonderful vitality— as well might the course of the Ganges be turned eastward, or the range of the Himalayas transplanted to the plains of Russia! And yet, if, in the days of Emperor Nero one had predicted the future religion of Europe, one would have fared no better. Strange to say, such a prediction was not only made, but soon fulfilled. Some three years since, when I walked through the streets of

Rome what struck me most forcibly was the ruins of the ancient temples of the Romans, and the ignorance of the people of the very names of the deities which had been worshipped there. Nominally at least, one religion spreads her sway over the whole of Europe; every crowned monarch bows his knee to but one Being, while in the churches throughout that continent worship is offered to no other.

History repeats itself. What hath been will be. Human nature is the same throughout the centuries. India herself has gone through mighty religious changes. The spirit of Swadeshism is in the air. In Bengal, it is rampant. There is a general sense of dissatisfaction not only among the educated few, but even among the thinking portion of the masses. The British Government, whatever its defects may be, has exerted a distinctively unifying tendency. The National Congress is gathering the thoughts of the country towards a common political focus. One common language is already spoken of for the whole Indian Continent. The cruelties of the caste-system and the cries of the child-widows are rallying the forces of social reform for a universal effort for liberty of action. Earnest spirits are anxious about the religious future of India.

In the natural order of events, India cannot long remain as she is. Among other things, a current of religious thought has set in. The leaders in this struggle are indeed few and far between. But lead they must; and the masses are being gently carried onwards by the force of the current. But the current lacks a steady flow. Its source is not lofty enough to generate great force. The religious current allies itself to the social, which it should not do. The social is given precedence of the religious, to the injury of the latter. And the result is that religious reform is thrown into the background, while social reform which can only be the daughter of the former, makes little headway against traditional and insurmountable barriers. There is, however, beneath all this apparent inertia, a feeble but real desire for a purer and loftier religion for all India.

The various attempts that have been and are still being put forth to bring about religious reform are proofs of that desire. Coming down from the days of Raja Ram Mohun Roy, we have seen that desire in one form or another in the Vedic Samaj, the Adi Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, the New Dispensation, the Prarthana Samaj, and other smaller movements in India. Though it is strange that none of the greater currents have had their origin in South India, I am sure that this is not due to want of religious fervour, but rather to lack of leaders with a wider horizon. But religious leaders are always welcome in Madras.

It is clear then that there is a widespread, though not very ardent, craving for religious reform among the educated classes throughout India. Even among the ordinary people, changes of thought in the direction of reform may be traced, particularly in regard to the unity and personality of God, the oneness of the human race, the immortality of the soul and its moral accountability, the reality of and the need of a remedy for sin, and a general belief that all people are worshipping the one and the same God. If the way were prepared, they would gladly accept one common faith, not only for India, but even for the whole world.

If it is desirable, to say the least, that in future there should be a common religion for all India, it is incumbent on all who are interested in religious reform either to find or found such a faith. We find at the present time that there are certain faiths which with varying degrees of aggressiveness are struggling for the mastery of the world; while others again do not exhibit the least degree of enthusiasm to bring others within their pale and to permit them to share in their religious privileges. It may be that some leaders of religious reform in their untiring efforts to shape and mould the future religion of India, may come upon one of these great religions, say, Buddhism or Christianity, for example, and adapt it to the spiritual needs of the Hindus. Others may again be of the opinion that a judicious blending of the great cults may result as the future religion of India. What-

ever the line of effort and research or their net results may be, the present religion of India cannot any more than the ancient religions of Greece, Rome and Egypt, stand before the advance of liberated reason and purer conceptions of God and man,—the Paramatma and Jivatma. India needs a life-giving religion even more than she requires crop-growing rains.

It may not be out of place to discuss at first what the future religion of India cannot be. In other words, let us carry on the discussion through a process of elimination. In the first place, it cannot be merely a social organisation. That is to say, a society whose members combine to discuss religious problems, engage in worship or prayer, or even listen periodically to a stirring lecture on serious subjects. These may play a subordinate part in practical religion, but cannot constitute religion itself. A social organisation, with codified laws and regulations may be an outcome of religion in a people, but it can never take the place of religion itself in its vital essence. The contents of the one cannot coincide with the contents of the other. The sphere of religion is first and foremost in the individual soul ; it may or may not manifest itself in organised social effort, or corporate action.

Secondly, the future religion of India cannot be mere ceremonialism. What passes to religion now, as in ancient times, is often mere ritual and ceremony. There may be a hidden meaning or a beautiful truth in the rite, but this of itself cannot constitute religion. The ritual may be simple or elaborate, apt or meaningless, helpful or hurtful, vulgar or gorgeous—still, it is mere form, not reality ; shadow, not substance. The common religion of India, that is to be, must be something real and living—throbbing with life in every fibre of its being. There is such a thing as the transformation into an end of what is merely a means. Ritual, especially in the case of the unthinking multitude, often becomes an end in itself and usurps the place of true religion.

Lastly, the future religion of India cannot be mere philosophy.

Philosophy is sometimes said to be a snare and a delusion. It is particularly so in this country. Discussions regarding the Soul and the Universe, Evil and its Causes, may be very interesting, but they can never assume the province or the functions of religion. To a patient wasting away under an attack of consumption, the perusal of abstruse treatises on the origin and diagnosis of *pulmonis phthisis*, and the various theories concerning its nature and cure, would be altogether useless. What he craves and needs is an able and sympathetic doctor at his side who can promptly prescribe the right remedy and eventually eradicate the fatal disease. Perhaps after the patient has fully recovered, he may indulge his leisure, provided he has a taste for it, in the study of lung disease. So also in the spiritual world. Philosophy is merely the handmaid of religion. What India needs is religion, not religious philosophy.

Turning now from the negative to the positive features of a faith that is likely to be accepted by the whole people of India, let us dwell awhile on this aspect of religion. When the national conscience is aroused and the national soul craves for something that can satisfy its deepest yearnings, the national sense will of itself search for those characteristics that will make up the ideal of a national religion. It may take an age, perhaps, to achieve this stupendous task, but still it must be faced. What applies to the nation applies also to the individual. It may also happen, as it has done in ages gone by, that first of all only a few individual souls may make the discovery and seal the sincerity of their convictions with the martyr's blood.

A worthy conception of God is the first characteristic of any religion that is to lay hold of our nation. As is the God, so is the worshipper. Such a conception is the foundation of true religion—the very alphabet of religious knowledge. A nation rises or falls in proportion as this conception is worthy or unworthy. Nothing except a worthy conception of our Maker, can raise man above the level of mere animal life. The usual conceptions of the Deity formed by unaided reason range from

one extreme to another—from an immensely magnified man with a host of failings and faults to an immensely rarefied, quiescent being, void of attribute, desire and personality. With so vague a conception, the worshipper oscillates between these opposite extremes, and clings by turns to the one conception or the other, but profits by neither. The worthy conception, therefore, must take precedence of all others in religious reform. Any reform that is sought to be made without this essential condition would prove to be but a house built on sand.

It may be asked here how this worthy conception of God is to be obtained ; and what, it may be added, is the test of the worthiness of a certain conception ? This naturally leads to a statement of another essential characteristic. The religion India must needs provide us an authoritative message from our Maker. Even of the worthy conception this second characteristic is the true, and ultimate source. Religion worth the name is in a word, God *with* us. This is not to be confounded with that dangerous dogma, God *in* us, the rock on which many an earnest soul has shipwrecked. It is the duty of all religious reformers to enquire with diligence if God has at any time and in any manner “ manifested Himself in the flesh,” or, in other words, if He has visited the human race and favoured it with a message of peace and good-will from Himself. This is a most important aspect of the question. The religious future of India will depend entirely on its discovery of such a message. To the convicted prisoner in his cell awaiting his doom, nothing less than the King’s signed and sealed message of pardon would be of the least avail. Our own moral instincts ought to be able to test the genuineness of anything that claims to be such a message. Some one has defined conscience as the tongue that tastes the difference between moral good and evil.

A third characteristic is the universality of such a religion. This is but a natural corollary of the previous feature. A religion that claims to be a message from an all-wise, loving

Father to His children on earth, can make no distinctions of colour or caste, prince or peasant, rich or poor, philosopher or rustic. Like those great essentials of life, air, light and water, the message must be common to all, irrespective of time, place, and circumstances. The common argument that all religions lead their respective votaries to God is an example of *petitio principii*, a begging of the question. The premise to be proved is that all are genuine messages from the self-same loving Father. It must strike at once all reformers and earnest seekers after Truth that a universal religion is an absolute necessity in this caste-ridden and custom-enslaved country.

Next, the future religion of India should offer a satisfactory solution of the problem of evil. There is physical as well as moral evil in the world. Physical evil has to be accounted for and the human spirit reconciled to its existence, its relation to the moral world, and its importance as a disciplining factor. Moral evil manifests itself in two ways—in the tendency of human nature to go astray from the Divine centre and the sense of guilt which haunts every man, though with varying degrees of intensity. The former has to be corrected and superseded by a centripetal force, while the latter calls for an effective expiation. The Indian mind which has dived into these profound mysteries will, when fully aroused, seek a more or less complete solution of the problem. Without some such solution as the lines suggested here, no religious reformers would accept a common religion for their country.

Fifthly and lastly, an ideal Personage will be the *sine qua non* of such a religion. India has ever been the land of heroes and hero-worship. It cannot do without a Divine Hero where religion is concerned. Well and wisely did the author of the Gita summon his countrymen to the practice of *Bhakti* in the hero of the day. Men will always need a Revealer, a Saviour, an ever-present Friend, and a perfect Example—all in One who can claim their deepest love and trust, and in Whom they can find their highest satisfaction and their noblest



inspiration. While all movements depend for their success on great personalities, this is specially so in the case of religious movements in which the emotional element in our nature plays a prominent part. This seems to be a fundamental law of religious life. All movements which lack this personal element seem to gradually decline, decay, and die. Religion has already been defined as God being with us ; in other words, it is contact with the God-man. A Person partaking of both the Divine and the Human ought to be the Life of the religion that India needs.

The future religion of India, if the trend of present religious thought and effort is rightly estimated, will possess at least the five above-mentioned characteristics. Most of the religions of the world, including even the several systems of Europe and Asia Minor which go by the generic name of Christianity, will be found to be lacking in one or more of these essential features. India must leave systems and sects severely alone. She has had enough of them herself. In the same religion, in Europe as well as elsewhere, there are sects which mutually repel each other, and are for all practical purposes entirely separate religions, ready, if need be, and the law permitted it, to burn one another in the sacred name of Religion. No, none of the Christian systems of Europe—systems which allow wars and bloodshed, and terrorism and anarchy, and look upon a neighbour's disasters with folded arms and a fatal indifference can ever hope to be the future religion of this land. India's sons must go behind and beyond all these systems and search if there was not at any time, or if there is not now, a religion possessing these five characteristics. For, if the systems fail, there is still *Christ* left. It was Mr. Mill, the great thinker who, though an agnostic, after studying the Person of Christ with an unbiassed mind declared that the human race—meaning thereby, I suppose, the people of Europe had rightly chosen Him as their ideal guide and representative. To me as an Indian, Jesus Christ has been found to possess all the five characteristics of

a universal religion, such as this country needs. They find their focus in Him. There is not much likelihood of any form of so-called European Christianity securing the general homage of India. But there is every likelihood of Christ being accepted as their God-given guide and ever-present Saviour. In Him and Him alone will India discover her future religion, the fulfilment of her sages' predictions and her saints' longings—in a word, her salvation, her joy and her crown.

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